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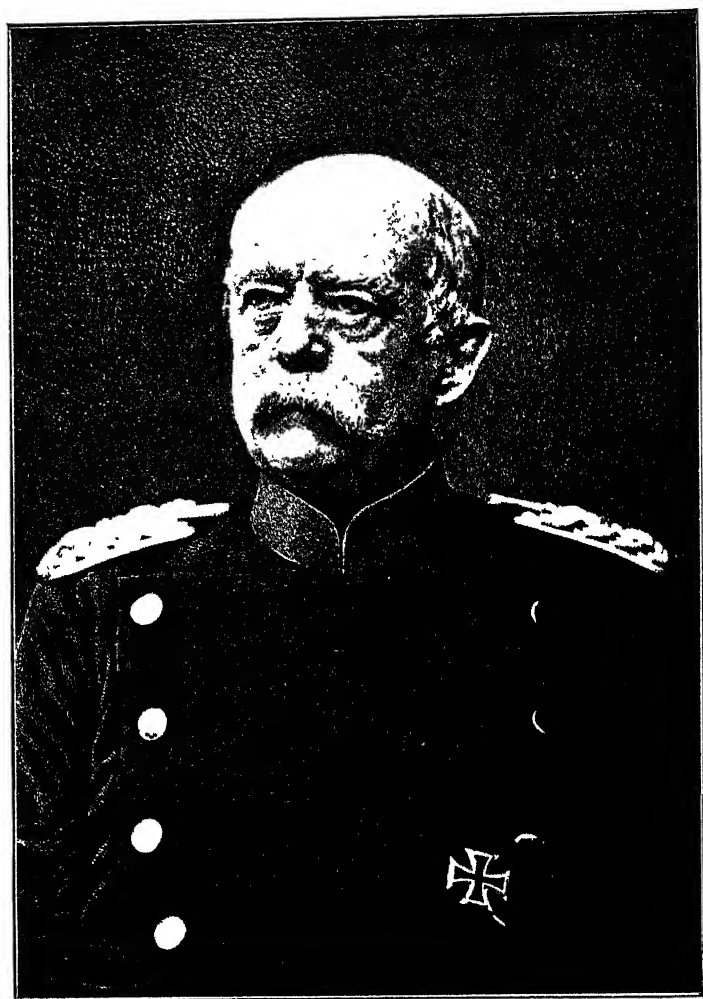
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*W. B. Wood*









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BISMARCK'S  
TABLE-TALK

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# BISMARCK'S TABLE-TALK.


EDITED,

*WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES.*

BY

CHARLES LOWE, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "PRINCE BISMARCK: AN HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY," "ALEXANDER III.  
OF RUSSIA," "THE GERMAN EMPEROR, WILLIAM II.," ETC., ETC.

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## PREFACE.

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THIS volume of BISMARCK'S TABLE-TALK is based on Herr von Poschinger's recently published "*Fürst Bismarck und die Parlamentarier: Die Tischgespräche des Reichskanzlers*" (three volumes), and "*Fürst Bismarck: Neue Tischgespräche und Interviews.*" These bulky volumes have been carefully compiled from a great variety of sources and private communications, etc., and present the great German Chancellor in his most human and interesting light.

Numerous are the biographies which have been written about the Prince; but this of Poschinger is the first systematic attempt to portray the Iron Chancellor's character and career, not in the words of others, but in his own. Dr. Busch made a beginning in

this respect, but it was a mere fragment compared with this new collection of Bismarckiana compiled by the ex-Chancellor's more industrious Boswell, Herr von Poschinger.

The latter includes in one of his tomes a collection of all the chief interviews which the ex-Chancellor accorded to representatives of the Press after his dismissal from office and retirement to Friedrichsruh; but, as having a peculiar character of their own, these will form the subject of a future volume.

The present work exhibits the celebrated statesman—the greatest doer of his time—in familiar intercourse with his friends, to whom he unbosoms himself on men and things in general; and though the time has not yet come for these friends of the Prince to make public his private utterances in their free and complete form, enough has already been done in this respect to show that Bismarck's table-talk possesses a charm far superior to that of the greatest masters of the art—such as Luther, Goethe, Johnson, or Coleridge.

C. L.

*October 1895.*

## CHRONOLOGY.

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AT Berlin, in April 1885, in connection with the festivities in honour of Bismarck's seventieth birthday, there was held an Exhibition of all the known, or at least all the attainable, products of art and literature on the subject of his career. Among the exhibits was an album belonging to the German National Museum, and containing, in the Chancellor's own large, bold handwriting, the following characteristic summary of his life and triumphs:—

“Leopold Edward Otto von Bismarck, born at Schönhausen, in the Altmark, April 1st, 1815.

“Member of the United Prussian Landtag, 1847.

“Royal Prussian Envoy to the German Bundestag (Diet), 1851..

“Ambassador to the Imperial Court of Russia, 1859.

“Ambassador to the Imperial Court of France, 1862.

“Royal Prussian Minister of State, September 23rd in the same year.

“Chancellor of the North German Confederation, 1867.

“Chancellor of the German Empire, 1871.

“*Fert undu nec regitur.*”

He was dismissed from office, 18th March, 1890 (the anniversary of the Berlin Revolution).



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# BISMARCK'S TABLE-TALK.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *INTRODUCTION.*

IT was a strange anomaly that one of the wisest men and best table-talkers of modern times should have been born on All Fools' Day (1815). It was still stranger that, in advertising the birth of a son who was to become so famous, the parents of Otto Edward Leopold von Bismarck-Schönhausen should have begged their friends to "dispense with their congratulations." It also looked like a dispensation of Providence that Bismarck should have made his first appearance in the world just as Napoleon was preparing to make his last appearance on the world's stage—at Waterloo. Bismarck was to prove the correlative, or rather the corrective, of the Corsican upstart—an anti-Napoleon. As Buonaparte had shaken to pieces the old and crumbling German Empire, so it was to prove Bismarck's great life-task to restore the shattered edifice, and give the ancient structure, with its modern improvements, a time-defying air. Napoleon had been a son of the South,



a representative of the Latin race. The Teutonic North was now to have its turn in keeping up the continuity of human greatness—of the one-man-power kind—in the person of one of its most primæval-looking sons, with the capacious brain of a statesman and the huge, heroic figure of a mail-clad knight.

This great soldier-statesman, this cuirassier-diplomatist, may be said to have reached the zenith, or at least the mid-point, of his wonderful career at the time when, in the presence of a brilliant flag-embowered gathering of German sovereigns and soldiers in the storied palace of the kings of France, he read forth the proclamation of the German Empire. In 1862 King William of Prussia had summoned Bismarck from Paris—where he was then acting as ambassador—to Berlin to make him a Minister; and within eight short years Bismarck, so to speak, had returned the compliment by summoning King William from Berlin to Paris to make him an Emperor.

Counting from the time of his appointment to represent Prussia in the Diet of the old Germanic Confederation at Frankfort, Bismarck had served his country continuously for twenty years before the proclamation of the Empire at Versailles. It had taken him all this time to reconstruct the Reich, so to speak; and he was destined to spend just as long a period on the still more difficult task of consolidating it. Before entering the service of the State, in 1851, he had figured in the parliamentary arena as the self-constituted champion of a divine-right royalty, and the sworn foe of all constitutional en-

croachments on the powers of the Prussian Crown. In the same arena, too, he had clearly shown his countrymen how national unity could *not* be achieved—not by the popular will alone, but by this will acting in harmony with that of the German Princes.

It was only, however, when Bismarck went to Frankfort to represent Prussia in the old Germanic Diet that his career may be said to have begun—a career which, after eight years' activity on the banks of the Main, first led him to St. Petersburg and then to Paris before he was finally summoned to Berlin to become Premier and "Parliament-tamer" to William I. How for the next eight years he led a life of constant "sturt and strife"—in budgetless conflict with the Prussian Chamber, and successively at war with Denmark, Austria, and France; how for twenty long years, after refounding the Empire, he was engaged in perpetual combat with the perils which beset the completion of his creative task—now plunging into the Kulturkampf, or war with Papal Rome; now wrestling with the ever-growing giant of Social Democracy and carrying on the work of economic reform parallel with that of repression; at one time battling for a protective tariff, and at another entitling himself to be called the greatest State Socialist of his age; anon fighting for an increase of the army, and again acting as an "honest broker" with the view of securing to Germany and Europe the continued blessings of peace;—how Bismarck did all these things and a thousand others which made him for more than a quarter of a century the most conspicuous figure on the stage of European history

—is the record of all that not too vividly impressed on the popular memory to require more than a general allusion in a work like this?

Twenty-eight years! That was a very long time for any Minister to be continuously in harness, struggling with infinitely more than the labours of a Hercules. In some countries—England, for example—the out and in, or see-saw, system of party government has its advantages. But I fear that it would have been unsuited to the particular kind of work which Bismarck was called upon to accomplish. The unity of the Fatherland was a work which demanded unity of purpose and continuity of effort; and Bismarck, alone, perhaps, among all his countrymen, had at once the physical and the mental characteristics which fitted him for the performance of this task.

Within five-and-twenty years of the fall of the Second Empire, France had well on to forty different Ministries. But from 1862, when Bismarck was called to office, till 1890, when he was dismissed from it, the policy of Prussia and Germany was constantly in the hands of one man. The elder Pitt was the English Bismarck of his day, but he never enjoyed such a continuous spell of opportunity for making his country great and glorious as his Teutonic after-type. In this respect Bismarck's position was unique, just as the products of his power are almost unparalleled. But he was unparalleled nearly in every way. The modern Plutarch will have to compare him, not with one, but with a hundred other heroes before he can bring out all the striking points of his strong individuality.

His character was full of strange contrasts. "I have conducted this Conference," he once remarked to Lord Salisbury, "sometimes like a gentleman, and sometimes like a sergeant-major." The Conference alluded to was the Congress of Berlin, and, curiously enough, when Bismarck first saw Anton von Werner's famous picture of that diplomatic assembly, he complained to the artist that he had made him—the Chancellor—look like a *Wachtmeister* (sergeant-major). That was truly marvellous intuition on the part of the painter. For the sergeant-major, or rather the colonel of cuirassiers, was always as strong in the character of Bismarck as it was in that of Cromwell, to whom he otherwise bore so striking a resemblance.

But while Cromwell was a root-and-branch man, Bismarck was a Royalist of the very first water. At first, indeed, he was more of a Strafford than a Cromwell, though the Lord High Chancellor shared with the Lord High Protector the habit of overriding and dissolving Parliaments. Both were straightforward to bluntness, and each avowed, in the words of Bismarck, that "he feared God, but nothing else in the world." Neither was a good speaker, and of both the best eloquence was their actions. Both distrusted human nature as deeply as they knew it. "*Ach mein lieber Sulzer*," said Frederick the Great to one of his officials, "*er kennt nicht diese verdammte Rasse*"—"Ah, my dear Sulzer, you don't know this accursed race of human beings so well as I do."

Bismarck resembled Sulzer's Sovereign, not only in his knowledge of human nature, but in many other respects as well. Had Bismarck been born to

the purple, had his colossal character enjoyed the setting of a crown, what a magnificent monarch he would have made, throwing deeply into the shade even the personality of Frederick the Great ! But, as it was, he certainly was the greatest son ever produced by the whole Fatherland since the soldier-philosopher of Sans Souci breathed his last. Stein, the regenerator of Prussia, was great enough in his way, but not to be compared with the regenerator of Germany. Stein was a mere burcaucat, while Bismarck united all the virtues and many of the brilliant vices which made up the political and even military character of the greatest of all the Hohenzollerns.

The ambition, the unscrupulousness, the benevolent despotism, the resourcefulness, the indomitable courage, the patriotism, the loves and hatreds of Frederick the Great—all contributed to the making of Bismarck ; and in the case of each character these qualities were all directed towards the same end. Frederick the Great had to wage a war lasting seven years in order to wrest a province from the Empress-Queen ; and in a war lasting only seven weeks, or rather, indeed, seven days, Bismarck succeeded in thrusting Austria out of Germany altogether, and at the same time out of Italy too. Cavour has been called the Bismarck of Italy, but even in Italy it was Bismarck who finished what Cavour began. Yet it is doubtful whether Bismarck could ever have unified his Fatherland unless to the sagacious statesmanship and patient diplomacy of a Cavour he had added the "blood and iron" method which was peculiarly his own ;

unless, indeed, with the subtlety of the South he had combined the irresistible energy of the North.

What King Alfred did for England in driving out the Danes once for all, was achieved by Bismarck for Germany by freeing it from the anomalous presence of the Austrians, while the English King and the German Chancellor had otherwise several points in common. Once the latter said that, if he had not been born a Prussian, he would have liked to be an Englishman, and indeed, as it was, he was in some things almost more of an Anglo-Saxon than of a Teuto-Saxon. He spoke our language fluently, was an ardent sportsman, a deadly shot, a daring rider, a fearless swimmer, and as heavy a drinker as could ever among us, in the bad old times, maintain his seat at table after his fourth bottle of port. In his younger days he led the life of Squire Western, while in the personal tastes and political methods of his manhood he bore a closer resemblance, perhaps, to Sir Robert Walpole than to the elder Pitt. He had all the Earl of Chatham's high-souled patriotism and sublime courage ; and, like Pitt, he ended by imbuing all his countrymen, who had theretofore been little else but objects of political contempt and ridicule throughout Europe, with the same proud *noli me tangere*, or *civis Romanus sum*, consciousness as, in the time of the mighty Commoner, clothed every Englishman as with a mantle of mail.

But while thus resembling William Pitt the elder, Bismarck seemed to bear a still stronger likeness to the "Glory of the Whigs" in his fondness for a country life, his affection for dogs and horses, the

occasional coarseness of his tastes and talk, his business habits of mind, and the masculine common-sense which formed the keystone of his character. Both men had imbibed their notions of political economy, not from books, but from actual contact with "ears and acres" of corn and other commercial realities. Both drove their bargains like farmers at a fair. Both dragooned their Parliaments; but while corruption was the instrument employed by Walpole, Bismarck merely resorted to coercion. When Sir Robert ceased to speak of politics he could talk of nothing but women—but here the resemblance between him and the German Chancellor came to an abrupt end.

For the name of woman rarely ever crossed the latter's lips. His private life was spotlessly pure. Frederick the Great tolerated no women at his Court, and in this other respect also Bismarck was like Carlyle's peculiar hero. He was little subject to feminine beauty, hated clever women, and married a lady—well born, yet plain, unpretentious, and country bred—who was the perfect type of a German *Hausfrau*, or household goddess of the economic kind. Apart from his only daughter, who used to act as his cipherer, his wife was the only woman who was ever able to exercise a subtle influence in politics and personal questions over him. But with Queen Victoria, when she went to Berlin to see her dying son-in-law, he was greatly charmed, as with one of "the wisest statesmen of the time." Yet it was the masculine more than the feminine element in the mind of her Majesty which captivated the Iron Chancellor.

Totally unlike Sir Robert Walpole in respect of his attitude to the fair sex, Bismarck also differed widely in the same regard from Victor Emmanuel, with whom he otherwise had so many points in common. For the Ré Galantuomo was bluffly outspoken, hearty, human, soldierly, jovial, fearless, and free; and the King of Italy, on going to Berlin, found to his great delight that all these qualities also formed part of the character of the Chancellor of Kaiser Barbabianca, as the Italians called the Emperor of Bismarck's creating to distinguish him from Kaiser Barbarossa. Yet with the bluntness and soldierly simplicity of Victor Emmanuel and of our own King Hal, Bismarck combined the astuteness and subtlety of a Richelieu or a Machiavelli. In diplomacy no one ever outwitted him, and it was only in the field of domestic politics, where his wisdom was less apparent, and, indeed, was sometimes little else than folly, that his opponents occasionally got the better of him, recalling to mind the spectacle of Samson Agonistes when he was made sport of by the Philistines.

But, on the other hand, it rarely happened that the Philistines in the German Parliament ever got clear away without bitter reason to rue the mockery in which they had indulged. For Bismarck never forgot or forgave. It was his continual boast that in all things he gave a Roland for an Oliver, and even more than that—*à corsaire, corsaire et demi*. He was not one of those model Christians who, having been struck on one cheek, turn to the smiter the other also. Nothing delighted him more than a good fight, and, indeed, he used to lament that the



powers which fitted him to shine in war had been frittered away on party politics. The best parry, he loved to say, was always the cut.

He was, indeed, as combative as Luther, whom in other respects also he so much resembled. As the monk of Erfurt had given religious freedom to the Fatherland, so the Knight of the Mark was born to bless it with political unity; and on the broad and crowded canvas of German history, certainly the two most conspicuous and commanding figures—apart from the Great Frederick—are those of Bismarck and Luther. Never were the best and most characteristic qualities of the German race better illustrated than in the careers of these two men—both tough and steadfast like the oaks of the Harz Mountains, physically strong, morally courageous, big-brained, shrewd-witted, rough-tongued, somewhat coarse in fibre, yet true in feeling and mighty in action. Bismarck had very much in common with Luther; but humility and self-effacement were not qualities which the immortal Minister shared with the immortal monk.

Frequently in the course of his career Bismarck had boasted himself to be as ardently devoted as was Cincinnatus to rural pursuits. But his love of the plough was nothing compared with his lust of power, and instead of imitating with a free and tranquil mind, after his fall, the noble example of Cincinnatus, he became transformed into a kind of German Prometheus, who, chained to his forest rock, spent all his bitter time in exclaiming against the ingratitude and injustice of the new Teutonic gods.

Resembling in many respects the founder of the United States of America, the founder of the Federal State system of Germany could never bring himself, like Washington, to relinquish his power after the completion of his life-work and the advance of old age. On the contrary, like Wallenstein, he had aimed at something like sovereign sway in a province appertaining to the Emperor ; and, like Wallenstein, he not only fell under the ban of his impetuous Kaiser, but actually became a butt to the swords and pikes of the officers and henchmen who had formerly trembled at and obeyed his very nod.

Like other great men, Bismarck had the defects of his qualities, but even his failings leaned to political virtue's side. His patriotism was of the loftiest and purest kind, and everything that he did was for the good of his country. The power he sought to encroach upon was not aimed at for selfish ends, as in the case of Wolsey and of Wallenstein, but for the public weal. "Right or wrong, *my country*," as the Emperor wrote on a portrait of himself which he presented to an American, was Bismarck's motto even more than his Majesty's. Inestimable are the benefits which he conferred upon his Fatherland, and not the least of these the fact that, after its unification, he secured to it for twenty years the blessings of continuous peace in a European world bristling with arms. The huge *Reichshunde* that always squatted on his hearth or crouched beneath his table might have been taken to symbolise the dogs of war—which he ever regarded it as his highest duty to hold well in leash. Europe was grateful to him for keeping the peace so

long, as it was also gratified by the spectacle of the fallen Chancellor finally making his peace with the Sovereign who so brusquely deprived him of the power which he had wielded with such unparalleled results to the Fatherland for eight-and-twenty long and eventful years.\*

The table-talk of such a man was bound to be intensely interesting—a thousand times more so, for example, than that of a Dr. Johnson, a Goethe, or a Coleridge ; for the words of a man of action have ever a greater charm, and, indeed, a higher value than those of mere men of thought. Like most great table-talkers, too, Luther included, Bismarck, after he had become famous, rarely conversed ; he merely monologued. An oracle himself, it was the duty of others to listen, or at the utmost to suggest. But this had not always been so. “Humboldt,” said the Chancellor once, “took kindly to me, as I was such a respectful listener, and thus I got a lot of things out of him. It was just the same with old Metternich, when once I spent a couple of days with him on the Johannisberg. Thun said to me, some time after, ‘I don’t know what glamour you have been casting over the old Prince, who has been looking down into you as if you were a golden goblet.’

“‘Well,’ said I, ‘I will tell you ; I listened quietly to all his stories with a look of intelligence, merely jogging the bell every now and then till it rang again. That pleases these talkative old men.’”

\* So far, this character-sketch was contributed by me to the *Daily Chronicle*, on the occasion of the Prince's eightieth birthday.—C. L.

And this was precisely how Bismarck himself was treated after he had become famous. Dr. Johnson had one Boswell; Bismarck has had hundreds, for few who were admitted to his table ever failed to make a note of his conversation. "I have thus," wrote one visitor to Friedrichsruh, "given you the sense of what Bismarck said, and I only wish I could repeat to you his very words, that you might also to some extent feel the charm of his talk and the deep impression he makes on all his hearers. You sit there as at one of Shakespeare's plays: no one thinks of putting a word in; you only listen and see before you in the body the great hero of the century. Everything he says is of the deepest interest. In his mouth the trivial becomes great, and the apparently unimportant full of meaning."

"Bismarck," wrote Motley to his wife, after a visit to his old Göttingen fellow-student at Varzin—"Bismarck and I have had long talks about the great events in which he has been the principal actor, and he goes on always so entirely *sans gêne*, and with so much frankness and simplicity, that it is a delight to listen. . . ." And again: "It is an infinite pleasure to listen to Bismarck's conversation, to hear the history of Europe during the last most eventful half-dozen years told in such an easy-going, off-hand way by the man who was the chief actor and director of that amazing history. . . . He talks away right and left about everything and anything."

The *Times*, too, once remarked (in 1879): "In all matters of great importance the nation is willing to be guided and counselled by him. The sparks of wisdom

which the Prince emits at his *soirées* will one day yet have a higher value than the longest debates in Parliament."

The *soirées* here referred to were the parliamentary "beer-evenings" which Bismarck instituted in the year 1869, when still Chancellor of the North German Confederation, and which gradually came to play as prominent a part almost in the government of Prussia and the Empire as the *Tabakscollegium*, or Tobacco Parliament, of Frederick William I., the father of Frederick the Great, the kidnapper of giants, and the founder of the Prussian army. For Bismarck was quick to discover that he could do far more political business with the deputies over beer and tobacco in his own home than from the ministerial bench of either Parliament. Hitherto the Chancellor had confined his social intercourse with the representatives of the people to the parliamentary dinners which he occasionally gave after taking office, and he had found, during the "Conflict Time," that these were an excellent means of smoothing away some of the asperities of partisan life, as well as of healing old sores, which not even the granting of an indemnity after Königsgrätz had been wholly able to close. But he soon began to find that these dinners were insufficient for their purpose, and that he must expand his social machinery if he was to extend his political influence.

At one of the dinners in question he complained bitterly to Herr von Unruh, a National Liberal, that the latter's party, in conjunction with some Conservatives, had tabled a certain obnoxious motion in

the Reichstag without giving him private notice of their intention; and the reply was that there had been no proper opportunity of doing so. An individual deputy durst not come to him without the knowledge of his party, and, even if he did, there was always the doubt whether the Chancellor would receive him.

To this the latter rejoined that before an ambassador could speak with him he must seek and be granted an interview by writing, but that his hall-porter and servants had orders to admit at once any deputy who wished to see him. In future, however, there could be no mistake, as he meant to set apart certain evenings for the reception of members of Parliament, *en masse*, when they could exchange ideas with him and themselves to their hearts' content.

Such, then, was the origin of these "Saturday evenings" at Bismarck's, which gradually developed into his parliamentary *soirées*, or "Home Parliaments," on any evening. At first the Chancellor had felt inclined to admit the Press to these free-and-easy confabulations, and indeed a list of invitations to the first of them had already been written out for the chief journalists in the capital. But he suddenly changed his mind, and resolved to keep the "quill cattle" at their distance, contenting himself with the immediate effect which he might seek to produce upon the minds of his parliamentary guests themselves.

But though the Press, in its official and corporate capacity at least, was rigorously excluded from these parliamentary *soirées*, they were open to many others

besides deputies—generals and other officers, government officials, cabinet ministers, bankers, country squires, foreign *attachés*, distinguished strangers, artists, *littérateurs* (as distinguished from mere press-men)—in short, all the most representative elements for the time being in the capital.

The hospitality of the Chancellor on these occasions was perfectly frank, generous, and unrestrained. The rooms were free, and the etiquette unconventional. "Excellencies are easy of approach," wrote an American guest of the Chancellor at one of these *soirées*, "and converse affably on the political situation with obscure men who neither cast nor control a vote. The great buffet, set up in one of the principal rooms, is supplied with cask after cask of salubrious beer from Bavaria, and is visited with growing frequency as the evening wears away. A long table will be spread with a cold collation; and Germans have good appetites. Such of them, finally, as desire more gentle pleasures, and are not above the weakness of gallantry, can stroll into the great *Salle*, made famous by the sittings of the Congress, and pay court to the Princess or the few scraggy dowagers about her.

"The most characteristic part of the feast is reserved, however, until late in the evening, after the ladies have been dismissed. Cigars are then handed round, but the Chancellor prefers a long German pipe, which a discerning lackey will bring him at the right moment, filled and ready for use. The Tobacco Parliament is opened. Debate there is, indeed, none; for, although suggestions and inquiries may now and

then be thrown out timidly by the listeners, the proceedings consist practically of a sustained monologue, which the Prince addresses to the group sitting near him or standing farther away in a semicircular fringe about the chairs ; nor are any formal conclusions adopted. There is, nevertheless, a well-considered method in the programme.

“Unable to speak without entertaining, the Prince has the art and the privilege of blending instruction with entertainment, the useful with the pleasant ; and thus compels the most frivolous guest to pause at some grave practical truth, while laughing at incomparable jokes. Indeed, the kernel of the discourse is perhaps to be found, only half concealed, in the jokes themselves, or the stories. With him, these are something besides a mere rhetorical device. He not only puts his hearers in good humour by pleasantries, thus gaining a favourable ear for his cause, but he actually combines precept and illustration with such art, and in such proportions, that his hearers are already convinced while they think they are only amused. That anecdote was not the setting of his proposition ; it was the proposition itself. This pun is not an insignificant *jeu d'esprit*, but a vital truth, or a sophism which the Prince wishes to see accepted as a truth. Thus the last hour of the evening passes away ;” and next morning, it might have been added, some of the Berlin papers delight their readers with tit-bits from the Chancellor's table-talk of the previous night—delight their readers without displeasing the Prince himself. For though he continued to the end to deny his invitations to the Press,



he was not at all averse from seeing his colloquial wisdom lend an additional lustre to its columns, and he was well aware that some of the deputies made a point of noting down his remarks for the use of their journalistic friends.

Begun in 1869, these parliamentary entertainments were continued till the Chancellor's dismissal from office in 1890, though by this time they had become changed from *soirées* into *Frühschoppen*, or forenoon-glass parties, when summer *Maibowle* of all kinds (hock-cup) would be added to the foaming beer of Munich, and the buffet in the Congress Hall would be loaded with all sorts of seasonable dainties. For as the Prince's health grew more and more indifferent, his doctor (Schweninger) forbade him further indulgence in his "beer and 'baccy evenings" with all their late hours, eating, drinking, smoking, and excitement; and the *Frühschoppen* were devised to take their place as a means of enabling the Chancellor to go on delivering himself of his worldly wisdom to the general crowd of deputies who cared to leave their cards on him and accept his invitation. It was only Radicals of the extremest type, and rough-mannered, irreconcilable Social Democrats who scorned to do either one or the other.

But this was by no means the only opportunity the Chancellor had of playing the oracle. For from time to time he gave select dinners to leading politicians and diplomatists, and otherwise there was scarcely a day, in the seventies at least, without his having about a dozen favoured but informal guests at table. The dinner hour was generally five; and

during, but especially after, this meal, the Prince kept up a continual flow of the liveliest and most entertaining talk on the topics of the day, as well as his reminiscences of the past. Then, again, the drawing-rooms of the Princess Bismarck were for many years open for the unceremonious reception of more intimate family friends and adherents every night after nine o'clock ; and the Chancellor rarely failed to join these fortuitous gatherings for an hour or so, in order to partake heartily of all the good things that were going, and indulge in his favourite habit of thinking aloud.

But with regard to this habit of his, take the following anecdote. When Bismarck was ambassador at Paris, M. Camille Doucet one day asked the Emperor for a special audience. His object in doing so was to repeat to him a conversation he had had with the Comtesse de Pourtalès about Bismarck, who, they both agreed, was destined to exercise a sinister influence on France. The Emperor thanked him for his warning, but said, "What danger can there be in a man who notoriously thinks aloud?" M. Doucet answered, "Count von Bismarck has a genius for conveying false impressions by telling the naked truth. His frankness is like the inky fluid which the cuttlefish at Biarritz throw round them—the more truthful he is, the less one sees into him."

In later years Bismarck's social intercourse was practically confined to those domestic entertainments of his which I have enumerated ; for a year or two after the French war—soon, in fact, after he was universally acknowledged to be the greatest man of

his time—he accepted no invitations to the tables of others—unless, indeed, they came from Court, and then they were in the nature of a command. But otherwise, after reaching the zenith of his fame and power, the Iron Chancellor broke festive bread under no roof but his own. At no ball, or dinner, or diplomatic entertainment, or theatrical performance, was his towering form ever seen. As far, indeed, as the society of the capital was concerned, he might as well have been dead. The Olympus-peak on which the Jupiter of European statesmanship sat enthroned was shrouded in a perpetual veil of mist. Bismarck preferred the comforts and the colloquial omnipotence of his own fireside, as he himself once wrote in the album of Count Stillfried:—

*“Beatus ille homo  
Qui sedet in suâ domo,  
Qui sedet post fornacem  
Et habet bonam pacem.”*

Which may be rendered :—

“Oh, happy is that man and blest  
Who sits in his own home at rest,  
Who snugly sits at his fireside  
In tranquil peace, whate’er betide.”

But it was the love of authority as well as of social comfort which thus confined the Chancellor to his own fireside. For even if his one-man power might be disputed in Parliament, his claims to be an autocrat of the breakfast-, the dinner-, and the supper-table were always readily allowed ; and even when he fell from the throne of his political might, it was still

some consolation to him that he could not possibly be deposed from his Delphic tripod. No longer the greatest tyrant of his time, he could at least continue to be the greatest talker; and thus it was that Friedrichsruh became a kind of latter-day Prophet's Mecca, which attracted incessant streams of eager worshippers from far and near.

And perhaps it was in the easy, unconventional retirement of rural Varzin or sylvan Friedrichsruh that the Chancellor was most expansive and delightful as a table-talkers. As was written by one of his visitors, quoted by Poschinger:—

“The life of Bismarck, as in the case of Luther and Goethe, shows that it is just the domestic and family side which furnishes a suitable frame to the statesman's picture. Since the days of his activity at the Frankfort Diet, utterances of Bismarck have been given to us from the close circles of family friends, utterances which shed abundant light on his original conception of life, his impulsive temperament, and the innermost self of the hero. It was, however, reserved for a later, maturer time to accomplish the perfect, harmonious development of this uniquely moulded nature.

“In the idyll of Friedrichsruh this consummation is reached. It is pure, invigorating humanity which there meets every visitor. An atmosphere of serenity, tranquillity, and grandeur pervades the rooms in which Prince Bismarck lives with his relatives and friends, and in which he receives his countrymen from every part of the Fatherland. Out of the speeches of the ex-Chancellor shines forth his deep love for his

compatriots ; and since he is one of the select few who are able to read the soul of this richly endowed, but still scattered and undeveloped nation, he appears to his contemporaries as a true prophet, a revealer of truths, the contemplation of which may not be neglected."

## CHAPTER II.

### *STUDENT AND STATESMAN.*

IT was not till after Königgratz, when Bismarck first stood clearly out to the world in all his greatness, that people began to pay the closest attention to his words, or to make a note of his private sayings ; and thus it is that the record of his table-talk prior to this point of time is not so rich as it afterwards became. Nevertheless, there have been preserved a considerable number of his utterances which shed an interesting light on his character and actions during what might be called the 'prentice period of his career. And perhaps the first recorded instance of his talk is the certificate of the commissioners who catechised him across a green baize table at his first and only State examination.

After Bismarck had finished his university career at Göttingen, and Berlin—which he did without taking a degree—he became "Auscultator," or official reporter, at one of the Berlin courts, and then removed to Aix-la-Chapelle as an aspirant for the office of "Referendary," or unsalaried apprentice, to the administrative chief of the district. But before attaining to this rank he had to pass a very strict examination, and the following was the report of the

commissioners—no bad testimonial surely to the mental capacity and attainments of a youth but in his twenty-first year, who had infected all his fellow-students at Göttingen with a spirit of idleness. The passages within brackets were subsequently struck out by the examiners before signing their certificate. The name is spelt without the *c*, as, indeed, it was only after Bismarck had entered public life that he introduced it into his patronymic:—

“DONE AT AIX-LA-CHAPELLE,  
“*This 30th June, 1836.*

“In accordance with official instructions there was held here this morning, from ten a.m. to one p.m., the oral examination of the Kammergerichts-Auscultator—*Leopold Eduard Otto von Bismark*—a candidate for the rank of Government-Referendary. This examination first of all applied to the candidate's general knowledge—especially in Greek and Latin, history and philosophy, then to public law in general and several branches of political economy and finance, in particular the present system of taxation in Prussia, and finally jurisprudence, the common law of Prussia, the French civil law, as well as common German feudal law—including a number of concrete cases.

“In respect of general school knowledge, the candidate displayed a very good standard (*recht gute Schulstudien*), and evinced his familiarity with the ancient tongues by translating and explaining several passages from Xenophon's *Cyropædia* as well as Cicero's *De Officiis*. Of the economic sciences the

candidate showed a very good knowledge, and, above all things, his answers to the questions that were put to him in public law and administration proved that he had been reflecting on what he had learnt [and that he is already on the way to independent views].

“Not less good was the candidate’s examination in jurisprudence. His answers showed that he had mastered the general principles of the Roman as well as of the Prussian law, and his judgments on the concrete cases that were put to him proved that he knows how to apply those principles. [His knowledge of French law was but slight.] Of French law he seemed, at least, to have acquired some knowledge. Altogether, the candidate showed an excellent power of judgment, quickness of comprehension in the questions put to him, and skill in oral expression.

“Accordingly, and in consideration of the fact that the written work of the candidate has been very favourably reported on, this Examination Commission is unanimously of opinion that the Kammergerichtsauscultator von Bismark appears to be very well qualified for promotion to the rank of Government-Referendary.”

The independence of judgment above referred to Bismarck had already shown when a student at Göttingen on more than one occasion, but more especially when the Rector once sent for and rebuked him in a paternal way for his pugnacity. Bismarck did not accept the reproof. To the Rector’s astonishment he made an indignant speech, expressing his



detestation of Frenchmen, French principles, and revolutionary Germans, whom he called Frenchmen in disguise. He prayed that the sword of Joshua might be given to him to exterminate all these. "Well, my young friend, you are preparing great trouble for yourself," remarked the Rector, with a shake of the head; "your opinions are those of another age." "Good opinions blossom again like the trees after winter," was Bismarck's answer.

They were to blossom again with great luxuriance after the winter of public discontent which culminated in the March Revolution of 1848, by which time Bismarck may be said to have entered public life as a member of the first United Diet of the Prussian monarchy, the first experiment in the way of a national Parliament. "All great cities," he said, "as being mere hotbeds of anarchy and revolution, ought to be swept from the earth;" a saying which procured for him the sobriquet of "*Stadt-vertilger*," or "Town-destroyer." Again the revolutionary Germans of 1848 were nothing but Frenchmen in disguise, and once more he longed for the sword of Joshua to smite them down. Could he but have had his own way, he would have cleared the streets of Berlin with volleys of grape-shot; or at any rate he would have adopted a much more energetic policy than that pursued by the weak-willed King, Frederick William IV., to cope with the forces of revolution. As Bismarck himself subsequently said:—

"After the days of March, the troops were in Potsdam and the King in Berlin. When I went out to Potsdam a great discussion was going on as to what

should be done. General Möllendorff, who was there, sat on a stool not far from me, looking very sour. They had peppered him so that he could only sit half on. One was advising this and another that, but nobody very well knew what to do. I sat near the piano, saying nothing, but I struck up a couple of notes, 'Dideldum Dittera' (here he hummed the beginning of the infantry double-quick step). The old fellow got up from his stool at once, his face beaming with delight, embraced me, and said, 'That's the right thing!—I know what you mean—march on Berlin.' As things fell out, however, nothing came of it."

On another occasion about this time Bismarck went out to Potsdam to see the king, with whom he walked up and down the terrace of the Orangerie, near Sans Souci, discussing the situation and the means of improving it.

His Majesty thought that it might be dangerous to have recourse to sharp methods of dealing with the insurrectionary movement.

"No," replied Bismarck; "it is only want of courage that can prove dangerous. Therefore, courage, courage, and ever more courage, and your Majesty will win."

Just at this moment the Queen stepped from behind some bushes, exclaiming,—

"Herr von Bismarck, how can you talk to your King in such a way?"

"Oh, leave him alone," said the King, with a smile; "I shall manage him"; though he did nothing of the kind, and only ended by granting his subjects a constitution.

"One of my most remarkable recollections," wrote Count Beust, "is connected with the last days of 1848, when I first met Prince Bismarck. I was acquainted with Herr von Savigny, who was afterwards envoy at Dresden. His house was close to my residence in the Wilhelmstrasse. One morning, when I went to see him, he said, 'I have a visitor in the house, Herr von Bismarck, of whose doings in the Landtag you must have heard.' Immediately afterwards Bismarck entered in his dressing-gown, smoking a long pipe. Our conversation turned upon the news which had just been received that Robert Blum (the barricade-fighter) had been shot at Vienna. I expressed the opinion that, from an Austrian point of view, this was a political mistake. 'You are quite wrong,' said Bismarck, interrupting me; 'if I have an enemy in my power, I must destroy him.' I remembered this saying more than once."

It has been frequently stated that Bismarck was one of the founders of the *Kreuz-Zeitung*, but *that* he was not. His name is not on the list of original shareholders, nor had he a hand in devising the journal; but he was a constant contributor to it, and received payment for his articles.

"I knew," wrote Herr von Unruh (President of the Constituent Assembly), "that Bismarck was closely connected with the *Kreuz-Zeitung*, and once asked him how he could allow this print to teem, as it did, with calumnies and lies, not even sparing honest women.

"Bismarck replied that he also was averse from that kind of thing, but he was told that in such a struggle

it could not be otherwise ; and my remark that such weapons only sullied those who used them had no effect. I might have then concluded from this incident, what subsequently became quite evident, that Bismarck was not very scrupulous in the choice of means to achieve a definite end."

Bismarck sought and found a seat in the first Prussian Parliament, which met in February 1849, to frame a constitution ; but, curiously enough, his address to the electors dealt less with the question of a constitution than with that of German unity—a work, he said, which must be commenced in Schleswig, and then gradually extended from North to South.

The result of the elections had been about equally favourable to the Royalists and the Radicals, and the former were jubilant. On meeting Bismarck, one of them exclaimed,—

"We have conquered!"

"No," replied Bismarck calmly, "not yet ; but we have attacked, and that is always the main thing. Our victory has yet to come, but come it will!"—which, however, it never did to the extent expected, as the following year saw Prussia blessed ("cursed," said Bismarck) with a constitution.

One Liberal nobleman—Count Schwerin, who acted as President of the Chamber—asked Bismarck what he had against him. "That you were not shot at the battle of Prague" (like the great Frederick's General of the same name), was the curt reply.

In the committee sittings of the Diet, he sometimes

would desert his own political friends, and take his seat among his opponents. One of these (Herr von Unruh) once asked him to what they were indebted for the honour of his presence on their side of the table.

"Oh, that is very simple," replied Bismarck. "My friends over there bore me to death; here I can amuse myself much better."

On one of these occasions he remarked to a democratic opponent (d'Ester),—

"If it were in my power I would have you shot."

"Well, Herr von Bismarck," retorted d'Ester, "when we get the upper hand I shall have you hanged."

But there is another version of this story, which represents Herr d'Ester to have observed to Bismarck,—

"You alone in all your party have always treated us with politeness. Let us make a bargain. If we gain the upper hand we shall spare you; if fortune should favour you, you shall do the same by us."

To this Bismarck replied,—

"If your party has its way, life will not be worth living; if ours is victorious, there will have to be executions; but they shall be conducted with politeness up to the last step of the ladder."

He had frequently been abused for belonging to what was called the *Junker* party, but he simply gloried in the title.

"Yes," he said proudly, "I am a Junker, and much, I think, to my advantage."

And again,—

“‘Whig’ and ‘Tory’ are also epithets which originally had a contemptuous meaning, and be assured that we too, on our side, will yet bring the name of *Junker* into respect and honour.”\*

When the Erfurt Parliament met in the spring of 1850 to imitate its Frankfort predecessor in the futile discussion of the best means of attaining national unity (*not* of the “blood and iron” kind), Bismarck, as one of the youngest members, was appointed one of the secretaries to the House; and when his name, in this capacity, was read out by the President, Dr. Edward Simson (who had also presided over the National Assembly in the Church of St. Paul at

\* Here it may be as well to explain this term. A “*Junker* (*Jung Herr*), or younger,” says Herr Bamberger, “is essentially the scion of a noble house which has devoted itself to military service—a mixture of Charles I. cavalier, Prussian lieutenant, German feudal lord, and Spanish Don Quixote.” In Prussia the term was originally applied to cadets of the noblesse, and to young country gentlemen who acted as ensigns, and did other squirely duties; while *Junkerthum*, or Junkerism, gradually came to denote the social qualities which distinguished this class—family pride (probably deepened by poverty), reactionary Conservatism, and arrogant caste demeanour. In 1848 the word was applied by the Liberals in a practical sense to the high Prussian or Conservative party—mainly composed of the reactionary landed gentry, who loathed the very name of reform. Mommsen, in his *History of Rome*, speaks of “narrow-mindedness and short-sightedness as the real and inalienable privileges of all genuine *Junkerthum*.” When the National Assembly, in 1848, was busy with its root-and-branch schemes of reform, a large number of titled gentlemen met in Berlin to devise means of guarding their ancient rights, and their Convention was dubbed the “Junker Parliament.”

Frankfort), Bismarck, who happened just then to be standing in front of the tribune, whispered to a fellow deputy (Reichensperger), "My deceased father would turn thrice in his grave, could he but hear that I have become a scribe to a Jewish pedant."

Long years afterwards, when the Empire had been founded, Reichensperger ventured to remind the Chancellor of this remark of his, adding, "Your Highness has now made this Jewish pedant President of the Supreme Court of the Empire (at Leipzig)."

Thereupon Bismarck warmly eulogised Simson—whose parents, for the rest, he said, had become Christians—as one of the most ardent and high-minded champions of the national idea, "a noble vessel, full of the finest sentiments."

In the Erfurt Parliament Bismarck had shown his countrymen how national unity could *not* be achieved, and things returned to the *status quo ante*. At Olmütz Prussia once more signed a contract of humiliating subserviency to Austria, and the affairs of the divided nation were again committed to the care of the resuscitated Bund, or Diet of the Germanic Confederation, at Frankfort, under the presidency of the Hapsburg Power. To this Power Bismarck, at that time, professed his devotion as being a more emphatic foe of the Revolution than Prussia had proved; and in his opinion repression of the spirit of revolution was meanwhile a more pressing task than encouragement of the national spirit.

In view of all these things, Frederick William thought that he could not do better than send, as his representative at the resuscitated Diet, the

man who had already made so great a mark in the various Prussian Parliaments as the champion of divine-right kingship, the foe of the Revolution, and the friend of Austria. For some time the King had had his eye on Bismarck, and even thought of offering him a portfolio, though from this course he was dissuaded by those who held the Knight of the Mark to be still too young and inexperienced, and too much of a Hotspur.

"The King," said Bismarck afterwards, "regarded me as a kind of egg, out of which he might be able some day to hatch a Minister"—a *mot* which may be read in the light of the following incident of a later time. Lord Ampthill once found him reading Andersen's story of the Ugly Duckling, which relates how a duck hatched a swan's egg, and how the cygnet was jeered at by his putative brethren, the ducklings, until one day a troop of lordly swans, floating down the river, saluted him as one of their race. "Ah," observed Bismarck, "it was a long time before my poor mother could be persuaded that, in hatching me, she had not produced a goose."

But Bismarck's King had a better opinion of him than Bismarck's own mother, and resolved to offer him the post of Prussian representative at the Frankfurt Diet, through Herr von Manteuffel, his Premier. The King was very much surprised at the promptness with which Bismarck had accepted his offer, and asked him whether he had well weighed all the difficulties of the position. He could not help admiring his courage, said his Majesty.

Bismarck replied that the King's courage in offering



him the post was much greater than his in accepting it. "Your Majesty," he added, "can give me a trial, and if I don't succeed, it will be easy to recall me."

But we have a supplementary account of this incident from the pen of Mr. John Lothrop Motley, Bismarck's old fellow-student at Gottingen and Berlin, who, writing from Frankfort in 1855, said: "In the summer of 1851, he told me, the Minister, Mantcuffel, asked him one day abruptly if he would accept the post of Ambassador at Frankfort, to which (although the proposition was as unexpected a one to him, as if I should hear by the next mail that I had been chosen Governor of Massachusetts) he answered, after a moment's deliberation, 'Yes,' without another word. The King, the same day, sent for him and asked him if he would accept the place, to which he made the same brief answer, '*Ja*.' His Majesty expressed a little surprise that he made no inquiries or conditions, when Bismarck replied that anything which the King felt strong enough to propose to him, he felt strong enough to accept.

"Well, he accepted the post and wrote to his wife next day who was preparing for a summer's residence in a small house they had taken on the sea-coast, that he could not come, because he was already established in Frankfort as Minister. The result, he said, was three days of tears on her part. He had previously been leading the life of a plain country squire with a moderate income, had never held any position in the Government or in diplomacy, and had hardly ever been to Court. He went into office with a holy horror

of the mysterious nothings of diplomacy, but soon found how little there was in the whole *galimatias*.

" . . . He is a man of very noble character and very great powers of mind. . . . Strict integrity, and courage of character, a high sense of honour, a firm religious belief, united with remarkable talents, make up necessarily a combination which cannot be found any day in any Court ; and I have no doubt he is destined to be Prime Minister, unless his obstinate truthfulness, which is apt to be a stumbling-block for politicians, stands in his way. . . . A man of most undaunted courage.

" Of course, my politics are very different from his, although not so antipodal as you might suppose, but I can talk with him as frankly as I could with you, and I am glad of an opportunity of hearing the other side, put by a man whose talents and character I esteem, and who so well knows *le dessous des cartes*. . . . The stand which he took in the Assembly from conviction, on the occasion of the outbreak of 1848, marked him out at once to all parties as one of the leading characters of Prussia. . . . The prominent place he now occupies as a statesman *sought him*. He did not seek it, or any other office."

But it was only by the merest accident almost that his career had not taken a lower and a lesser course. For, shortly before his appointment to Frankfort, the Regent of Anhalt-Bernburg had requested the Prussian Government to name several men from whom one might be chosen for a high State office in the Duchy. The request was complied with, and among the names submitted was that of " Otto von Bismarck-Schönhausen." Bismarck and another

were ordered to present themselves on a certain day before the Regent to demonstrate their fitness for the position to be filled. Both set out accordingly for the centre of the Duchy ; but, as ill luck or luck would have it, the axle of the carriage in which Bismarck journeyed broke on the way, and he was compelled to stay a night at the nearest town. Next day he resumed his journey, but he arrived twenty-four hours after the time appointed for the interview. In the meanwhile his rival had been given the post. So Bismarck returned home, pretty much in the same position (if he had only known it) as Saul after he had gone forth to look for his father's asses and found a crown.

We have seen what Motley thought of Bismarck ; and now let us see what the latter thought of Motley. Speaking to his secretary once, he said :

"I met Motley at Göttingen in 1832, I am not sure if at the beginning of the Easter or Michaelmas term. He kept company with German students, though more addicted to study than we members of the fighting clubs. Although not yet having mastered the German language, he exercised a marked attraction by a conversation sparkling with wit, humour, and originality. In autumn of 1833, having both of us emigrated from Göttingen to Berlin for the prosecution of our studies, we became fellow-lodgers in the house, No. 161, Friedrichstrasse. There we lived in the closest intimacy, sharing meals and outdoor exercise.

"Motley, by that time, had arrived at talking German fluently : he occupied himself not only in translating Goethe's *Faust*, but tried his hand even

in composing German verses. An enthusiastic admirer of Shakespeare, Byron, and Goethe, he used to spice his conversation abundantly with quotations from these his favourite authors. A pertinacious arguer—so much so that he sometimes watched my awakening in order to continue a discussion on some topic of science, poetry, or practical life, which had been cut short by the chime of the small hours—he never lost his mild and amiable temper. . . . The most striking feature of his handsome and delicate appearance was his uncommonly large and beautiful eyes. He never entered a drawing-room without exciting the curiosity and sympathy of the ladies.”

Though appointed to the Diet at Frankfort (May 1851), Bismarck still retained his seat in the Prussian Chamber, in which, however, he now rarely made his appearance. On the two first occasions of his doing so, he incurred the risk of a challenge from one offended deputy, and sent his own second to another. This latter was Herr von Vincke, who had referred to Bismarck as a “renowned diplomatist,” but at once withdrew the expression, “as all I know of his diplomatic achievements is limited to the well-known story of the lighted cigar.”\*

\* Once, during the Franco-German war, Dr. Busch asked the Chancellor about “the famous cigar story.” “Which do you mean?” said the Prince. “When, your Excellency, Rechberg kept on smoking a cigar in your presence, and you took one yourself.” “You mean Thun? Well, that was simple enough. I went to him, and he was working and smoking at the same time. He begged me to wait a moment. I did wait; but when it seemed too long, and he offered me no cigar, I took out one, and asked him for a light, which he gave me with a rather astonished look.”

As Bismarck looked upon these words in the light of an insult, he hastened to call out his calumniator, and they fought a bloodless duel with pistols on March 25th, 1852.

On this subject General Leopold von Gerlach wrote in his Memoirs (under date March 23rd): "Bismarck came to see me last night, and was very pleasant about his forthcoming duel—which Stolberg regards in a very serious light, but nevertheless declares to be necessary. Büchsel" (a pastor of some kind) "had refused to give him the Sacrament, which I do not think was right of him, as the duel is in the nature of a righteous war of defence. Kleist could not persuade Büchsel to yield in the matter." But again on March 28th: "Meanwhile, Bismarck's duel has taken place without anything coming of it. Büchsel, after all, administered to him the Holy Communion the previous day, and before firing his first shot, he (Bismarck) offered up a prayer—a thing, it is said, which had a great effect on Vincke. Bismarck has returned to Frankfort"—whence he soon after wrote that he would not seek re-election to a seat among such "Chamber-chatterers."

But this was by no means the only duel in which Bismarck threatened to become involved—apart altogether from the sixty sword-encounters from which he had always emerged victorious at Göttingen. In 1849 he had sent a challenge to the editor of *Kladderadatsch* (the Berlin *Punch*), though later on, during his membership of the Diet, the public strongly suspected that he wrote secretly for that

paper, particularly whenever a specially good skit appeared on an Austrian diplomatist.

But after his Vincke duel, the only other occasion on which he sought to settle a personal dispute by wager of battle was during the "Conflict Time"—still ahead—when he called out the famous physiologist, Professor Virchow, who, in the Chamber, had roundly accused the Premier of unverity. "What do you think you can accomplish, gentlemen, with a tone like this?" asked Bismarck. "Do you really wish us to settle our political quarrels after the manner of the Horatii and the Curiatii? If so,"—and, suiting the action to the word, home he went and sent a challenge to his slanderer. But the learned professor refused to meet the Minister-President as the Albans had faced the Roman brothers.

This incident caused a great sensation at the time, but it was nearly forgotten when it was cited in a singular way in court. A gentleman was on trial for sending a challenge, and, in mitigation of sentence, the defendant referred to the case of Bismarck *versus* Virchow, observing that Bismarck had never been called to account for his challenge. The judge replied that he was not prosecuted as being protected by the military uniform which, as an officer in the *Landwehr*, he was accustomed and entitled to wear.

"With regard to the Virchow affair," said Bismarck to a friend, who had brought him to book for the incident of his challenge, "I am past the time of life when one takes advice from flesh and blood in such things. When I stake my life for any matter,

I do so in that faith which I have strengthened by long and severe struggling, but also in honest and humble prayer to God ; a faith which no word of man, even that of a friend in Christ and a servant of His Church, can overthrow."

Some years later, when a young Prussian officer of noble family was turned out of the army for declining a challenge on conscientious grounds, an English clergyman sent Bismarck a copy of the diary of Mr. Adams, who was American Minister at the Court of St. James in the beginning of this century. Mr. Adams spoke with admiration of the efforts which were being made to put down duelling in England by force of public opinion. Bismarck, in courteously acknowledging the book, wrote : " There is much good sense in England, but you have not done away with duelling, as you suppose. There is more of it among your schoolboys, who fight with their fists, than among those of any other country ; and this may prevent the necessity for much fighting in after-life. English boys take rank at school according to their pluck, and hold that rank ever afterwards."

And *à propos* of this subject it may here be mentioned that Bismarck once asked Pastor Stöcker, of anti-Semitic renown, whether there were any text in the Bible saying, " All men are cowards " ? " No, you are thinking of the text : " The Cretans are all liars," said Stöcker. " Liars—cowards, it comes to much the same thing," answered Bismarck ; " but it's not true only of the Cretans ;" and then he asked Stöcker whether he had met many thoroughly

brave men. The Court Pastor replied that there might be several definitions of courage ; but Bismarck interrupted him with a boisterous laugh : " Oh, yes, the moral courage of letting one's face be slapped rather than fight a duel ; I have met plenty of men who did that."

More than once at Frankfort Bismarck was on the point of fighting a duel with the Austrian President of the Diet, for he had not been many weeks on the Main before his attachment to Austria became changed to gall and bitterness. On one occasion things came to such a pitch that Count Rechberg passionately exclaimed, " One of my friends shall wait on you in the morning."

" Why all this unnecessary delay ?" Bismarck coolly replied. " In all probability you have a pair of pistols handy. Let us settle the matter immediately. While you are getting the things ready I shall write a report about the whole transaction, which, in case I am killed, I request you to forward to Berlin."

Both set about their work. When Bismarck had finished he handed the sheet to Count Rechberg, requesting him to examine it. Rechberg's passion had in the meantime given way to sober reflection. After perusing the report, he said, " What you say is quite correct ; but is it really worth while fighting a duel for such a reason ?"

" That is exactly my opinion," was Bismarck's answer ; and there the matter ended.



## CHAPTER III.

### *FROM FRANKFORT TO BERLIN.*

AS Bismarck invariably spoke as he wrote, his table-talk during the Frankfort period of his career will be found in the letters which he penned to his wife and sister throughout these eight years, as well as in his official despatches to Berlin, some of which are marvels of character-sketching. But here is a vivid glimpse of his family life and ways—again from the pen of his old fellow-student Motley, who visited him at Frankfort in 1855:—

“ . . . When I called, Bismarck was at dinner, so I left my card and said I would come back in half-an-hour. As soon as my card had been carried to him (as I learned afterwards) he sent a servant after me to the hotel, but I had gone another way. When I came back I was received with open arms. I can't express to you how cordially he received me. If I had been his brother, instead of an old friend, he could not have shown more warmth and affectionate delight in seeing me. . . .

“ Madame de Bismarck and her mother have both assured me over and over again that Bismarck was nearly out of his wits with delight when he saw my card. . . . It really gives me pleasure to know that a

man of whom I think so highly has such a warm and sincere friendship for me. I am sure that you will like him, and I only regret that we can see so little or nothing of each other for the rest of our lives. . . .”

“The Bismarcks are as kind as ever. It is one of those houses where every one does what one likes. The show apartments where they receive formal company are on the front of the house. Their living-rooms, however, are a *salon* and dining-room at the back, opening upon the garden. Here there are young and old, grandparents and children and dogs all at once ; eating, drinking, smoking, piano-playing, and pistol-firing (in the garden), all going on at the same time. It is one of those establishments where every earthly thing that can be eaten or drunk is offered you ; porter, soda-water, small beer, champagne, burgundy, or claret are about all the time, and everybody is smoking the best Havana cigars every minute.”

This domestic picture may be supplemented by one that was drawn a year or two later by a cavalry officer attached to the Prussian Legation at Frankfort.

“Whenever Bismarck entered any social circle, he received honours—not always willingly paid, not always free from envy—on the part of the men, and was the object of coquettish attentions on the part of the ladies ; but, ever cheerful, and yet ever on his guard, though apparently careless, he was always master of the situation. When he sat down to take tea in any company, how quiet, yet how sparkling, was the flow of his wit. ‘He always says something

unexpected,' was the testimony of the fair ones who surrounded him ; and, indeed, it was not the brilliant play of schooled and practised society wit, but an inexhaustible fountain of pure originality, a fountain which continually renewed itself, and surprised its owner hardly less than his hearers, so that the giver was at the same time an enjoyer of what he gave. No such gladness was shed around by De Morny, with his airs of superiority and his nimbus of half-brotherhood ; nor did it grow round the conversational arabesques of Count von Beust, or radiate from the kid-leather of his elegant little boots. It was, therefore, pardonable if they or others, in their malice, spoke of the former dike-surveyor of Schönhausen as a '*diplomate en sabots*'—indeed, very pardonable, for wooden shoes are better than wooden ways.

"All knew, feared, and spoiled the Bismarck of society ; those who saw Bismarck at work were filled with astonishment. He was quick, and at the same time indefatigable. It was a thing never to be forgotten to hear him dictate his reports. Arrayed in a large-patterned dressing-gown of green damask silk, his hands thrust into its pockets, pacing up and down his room, he seemed to think aloud in impatiently overflowing sentences, now driving the secretary to wild haste, now, by some droll parenthetical remark, compelling him to lay down his pen, lest, shaken by his laughter, it should drop a blot on the paper. Sometimes it happened that Frau von Bismarck interrupted her busy husband with some domestic query, and then an amusing interlude would take place. Thus, I remember a question

about the fit of some newly-made shirts was once put to him whilst at his writing-desk. The husband, who had one of the new dozen on at the time, expressed himself as satisfied on the whole, but objected to the height of the collars, and, seizing the paper-scissors, with a pleasant smile, clipped off the superfluous amount of collar to show how much he wished to have them lowered.

“In matters of service Herr von Bismarck kept strictly to the rule he had first laid down. The young *attaché* might at any hour of the day or night expect to be called into the study of the Ambassador. It sometimes occurred that when he returned between midnight and morning from a ball, or its epilogue at a beer-house, he had to lay aside all his exhaustion, along with his hat and his cotillon rosette, and teach his hastily snatched-up pen to dance a long waltz without any pauses, to the dictation of the Ambassador, who, even then, was sometimes troubled with sleeplessness. On such occasions, early or late, many a hint fell—my memory does not deceive me—on a gratefully willing ear. An historical inaccuracy would be followed by the question, ‘Have you, then, skipped over a page or two in Becker’s *History of the World*?’ The reply to a question about relationships in a family of no very high standard was, ‘Don’t you know that? A young diplomatist must know the *Almanach de Gotha* by heart; for the things that form its contents play an important part in politics.’ The somewhat careless execution of a given order was once more cuttingly reproved: ‘It must be very unpleasant for yourself; for, no doubt,

you agree with me that what a gentleman has engaged to do is already as good as done.'"

During his residence at Frankfort Bismarck was ever a great traveller, and in particular he was a frequent visitor to Paris. It had been mainly at his instigation that the Diet hastened to recognise the *coup d'état* and Napoleon's assumption of the Imperial title, so that he stood high in the estimation of "the man of destiny." Being in the French capital in the autumn of 1855 (during the Crimcan War) a dinner was given in his honour by Count Hatzfeldt, the Prussian Minister, among the guests being M. Rothan, a French diplomatist, who afterwards wrote: "M. de Bismarck admired our army and declared Napoleon III. to be a great ruler. Nor did he forget the Empress, of whom he had spoken with such scant consideration in his Frankfort letters, saying that she was the loveliest woman he had seen in Paris, doubtless in the belief that this flattery would reach the proper quarter and bear seasonable fruit."

It was on this occasion, too, that Bismarck first made the acquaintance of Queen Victoria, who had gone over to Paris to return the visit of her Imperial ally. A grand ball was given at Versailles, when, writes Sir Theodore Martin, "several of the guests were presented to her Majesty, among others one who was afterwards to visit the halls of the palace of Versailles under very different circumstances—Count (only Herr von, as yet) Bismarck, then Prussian Minister at Frankfort. He is described" (in the Queen's diary) "as 'very Russian and *Kreuz-Zeitung*,' and as having said, in answer to

the Queen's observation, "how beautiful Paris was," '*Sogar schöner als Petersburg*' (Even more so than St. Petersburg)."

About the time of the marriage of the Princess Royal of England to the Crown Prince of Prussia (January 1858), Bismarck had written to his chief at Berlin, in reply to a charge by Lord Bloomfield, English Ambassador there, that in a certain matter he had acted with great hostility towards England.

"I am really at a loss to know what could have induced me to act as I am said to have done, seeing that not only with both the Bentincks, but also with Sir Alexander Malet" (English Minister at Frankfort) "I have always been on the best footing, and seeing also that, in general, as your Excellency knows, my sympathies for England are livelier than for any other country after my own."

But, while cherishing this personal predilection for England, Bismarck never allowed his sentiment to influence his politics. "Bursts of sentiment are out of place in politics," as he was afterwards to tell M. Jules Favre, the tearful suppliant for pity to his conquered country. It was this distinction that Bismarck ever made between his own private feelings and his political convictions which saved Prussia from the danger of siding with the Western Powers during the Crimean War—much to the exasperation of these Powers.

"This policy of yours will conduct you to another Jena," haughtily remarked the Marquis de Moustier, French Minister at Frankfort, in the spring of 1855.

"Why not to another Leipzig or another

Waterloo?" Bismarck replied, with a lofty look ; and, as a matter of fact, it was in virtue of Prussia having thus remained neutral during the Crimean War that Russia returned the compliment in 1866 and 1870, thus enabling Prussia to achieve another Leipzig and another Waterloo, in the shape of a Sadowa and a Sedan. This was one of the very finest acts of foresight which ever distinguished Bismarck's career ; but he would never have been able to claim the credit for it, had he allowed his personal predilection for England to influence his international politics.

It was also for the same reason that he lamented—quite as much as the *Times* did, though for a very different reason—the betrothal of the Crown Princess Royal of England to the heir to the Prussian crown. There was some of his table-talk on this subject which cannot very well be repeated ; but the rest of it he himself thus reproduced in a letter to General von Gerlach, Aide-de-Camp to Frederick William IV. :—

"You ask me what I have to say to the English marriage. I must separate the two words in order to make my meaning clear. The English part of the business pleases me not at all. As for the marriage, it may be all right, for the Princess has the reputation of being a young lady of mind and heart ; and one of the first conditions for discharging one's duty in this world, whether as king or subject, is that his home shall be free from all that is represented in and involved by the contrary of mind and heart in the wife who presides over that

home. If, therefore, the Princess succeeds in leaving the Englishwoman in England, and becoming a Prussian in Prussia, she will be a blessing to this country. Royal marriages, as a rule, give the house whence the bride comes influence over the house which she enters, but not *vice versa*. This is especially the case when the wife's country is more powerful, and has a more strongly developed national feeling than the husband's.

"If, therefore, our future Queen should remain even partly the Englishwoman on the throne of Prussia, I can only see our Court dominated by English influences without any corresponding consideration for ourselves and the other numerous sons-in-law of her gracious Majesty to be, except, perhaps, when the Opposition in Press and Parliament may choose to abuse our own royal family and country. With us, on the contrary, British influence will find the most fertile soil in the servile admiration of the honest German citizen for Lords and Commons, and in the Anglomania for newspapers, sportsmen, landowners, and magistrates. Every Berliner feels himself already an inch taller when a real English jockey addresses him and gives him an opportunity of torturing the Queen's English. What will it be when the first lady in the land is herself an Englishwoman?"

"No petticoat government for us!" exclaimed Bismarck at a later time; and he was always fond of descanting on the superiority of the masculine over the feminine element in nature—the former represented by the Germans, the latter by the Slavs



and Celts. He could not bear to let it be thought that he was inferior in any respect to the fair sex.

Once at Frankfort he chanced to sit at a *table d'hôte* opposite a couple of young ladies from the Baltic Provinces, who began conversing with considerable *abandon* in the Lett tongue; and Bismarck suspected that he himself was the main object of criticism on the part of his fair but rather provincial-mannered companions, who never imagined that a barbarous dialect like theirs would be understood by any one in a civilised city like Frankfort. The quizzing mood of the ladies having reached its climax with the dessert, Bismarck whispered to his neighbour to hand him a key whenever he heard him utter some unintelligible words. "*Dohd man tò azlek,*" said Bismarck presently to his friend, who at once replied by producing the article demanded; whereupon the unsuspecting fair ones from Courland looked at their *vis-à-vis* in horror, then at each other in confusion, and, blushing a deep crimson, vanished from the room.

He had picked up a smattering of Lettish when once on a visit to Courland; and now to his linguistic accomplishments he was to add a considerable knowledge of Russian when transferred from Frankfort to St. Petersburg on the eve of the Italian war (1859), in which he beheld Prussia's opportunity for emancipating herself, once and for all, from the intolerable tutelage of Austria.

Talking with a Liberal friend, Von Unruh, at this time, about the subserviency of the minor States to Austria, he remarked that "there was only one ally

for Prussia, if she knew how to win and deal with it, and that was—the German people!”

Herr von Unruh expressed surprise to hear such sentiments come from the lips of an anti-democratic man like Bismarck.

“Well,” rejoined the latter, “I am still the same Junker I was ten years ago, when we became acquainted in the Chamber; but I should have no eyes and no brains in my head if I did not clearly make out the actual state of our affairs.”

Herr von Unruh had found Bismarck in bed reading the *Kreuz-Zeitung*, which he threw aside, on the entrance of his friend, with the contemptuous remark that “This journal has not a spark of Prussian patriotism, urging, as it does, Prussia to support Austria against France and Italy.”

Bismarck spent about three years (1859-62) at St. Petersburg, where he had been “placed in ice” by the Prince Regent of Prussia (afterwards German Emperor), and here he made the best possible impression as a table-talker—even against his own government and its questionable doings.

“Society,” said a Russian writer, “was unanimous in declaring that this diplomatist formed a marked contrast to his stiff, would-be well-bred, buttoned-up, and pretentious predecessors, and that he was a veritable ‘*homme du monde*.’ The fresh, unconstrained, and yet self-possessed manner of the new-comer accorded in every respect with the social demands of our aristocracy. Instead of the anxious precision which we had been accustomed to expect from German statesmen, Herr von Bismarck displayed

an ease and affability that facilitated official as well as private intercourse with him, and rendered ceremony unnecessary. Business people were impressed with the offhand readiness of the diplomatist, who proved himself at home on every subject; while the lions and lionesses of our drawing-rooms were charmed with the unfailing good-temper, the flowing wit, the distinguished yet simple manners, and the excellent French of the man of the world. Here, at last, was a German with whom we could associate as easily and pleasantly as with other people. Our overweening aristocracy, accustomed to look down on everything German, and to consider itself superior to all others, joyfully acknowledged him as one of its own caste."

From St. Petersburg, where he had acted as Prussian Minister for over three years, Bismarck was transferred to Paris in the same capacity, though here his stay only lasted a little over three months (June to September, 1862). But during this brief period he had ample opportunity of completing his study of the character of Napoleon and his satellites. De Morny was fond of quoting the anecdote about Alcibiades having cut off the tail of his dog to give the Athenians something to talk about, and he and the Prussian Minister had more than one conversation about the art of ruling. Bismarck had the frankness to say that he looked upon the comedies of Dumas the younger, and indeed on most French plays of the lighter sort, as grossly corrupting to the public morals. "*Panem et circenses*," smiled De Morny. "*Panem et saturnalia*," muttered Bismarck.

Another point upon which the two diplomatists could not agree was about the qualities requisite in a public servant. De Morny cared nothing for character. The men whom he recommended for prefectships or posts in the diplomatic service were, for the most part, adventurers—brilliant, witty, *diseurs de rien* and cajolers of the other sex. "A French Ambassador," he maintained, "should always consider himself accredited *auprès des reines*."

Bismarck loathed ladies' men, and he had the poorest opinion of Napoleon's diplomatists. His own ideal of a State functionary was the blameless man without debts or entanglements—laborious but not pushing, well educated but not abounding in ideas, a man in all things obedient. He sneered at diplomatists like M. Benedetti and the Duc de Gramont, calling them "dancing dogs without collars." They never seemed to have a master, he complained, "but stood up on their hind legs and performed their antics without authority from man alive. If they barked, you were sure to hear a voice from Paris crying to them to be quiet. If they fawned, you might expect to see them receive some sly kick, warning them that they ought to be up and biting."

One day Bismarck had been dining at the "Moulin Rouge" with Von Beust and Seebach, and as they were on their way to "Mabille" to spend the rest of the evening, he exclaimed, as he took the arm of Von Beust, "Kind gentlemen, when I am Minister I shall blow you all into the air."

It was on this occasion, as Beust writes in his *Memoirs*, that "Bismarck told me it was a blessing

to him to have passed some years with 'good-natured Gortchakoff after all that he had suffered in Frankfort from Prokesch'; while, on the other hand, Prokesch had assured me, when I visited him at Frankfort in October 1855, at the time of his appointment as Austrian Minister to Constantinople, that the prospect of negotiating with the wise Ali instead of with Bismarck seemed to him like an Oriental vision of the blessed."

As for the attitude of France in the event of a war between Prussia and Austria, Napoleon was good enough to promise unconditional neutrality. It is true, he again spoke of "some slight rectification of frontier," mentioning the Saarbrück coal-fields as a desirable acquisition for France; but Bismarck distinctly told him that Prussia would not part with a single village, saying that, even if he himself were willing (which he was not), the King would never hear of such a thing. The Emperor, who underrated the strength of Prussia, repeatedly warned Bismarck of the danger he was incurring in language similar to that which the latter himself had used to him in 1857, when taken into his Majesty's confidence with respect to certain audacious schemes of conquest and aggrandisement affecting some of his neighbours: "*Sire*," Bismarck had replied then, "*Sire, vous vous embourberes*" (You will get yourself into trouble with such ideas). It was now Napoleon's turn to caution Bismarck in similar language, but, seeing him full of hope and courage, despite his own evil-boding, he dismissed him with a "Very well, then, do what you cannot help doing."

During his short stay at Paris Bismarck took a run over to London, and this was what was afterwards written of him by Count Vitzthum, then Saxon Envoy in London :—

“Among the princely personages who visited the International Exhibition in London was the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar. The Russian Envoy, Baron Brunnow, gave a great dinner in his honour, and I was present. Among the guests was the Prussian Minister in Paris, Herr von Bismarck-Schönhausen, who after dinner had a long conversation with Disraeli. The leader of the Opposition gave me the following account of this conversation :—

“‘I shall shortly be compelled’—the Prussian statesman spoke nearly in these terms—‘to undertake the presidency of the Prussian Government. My first care will be to re-organise the army, with or without the help of the Diet. The King has rightly imposed this task upon himself, but with his present counsellors he cannot discharge it. With the army placed in a position to enforce respect, I shall seize upon the first pretext for declaring war against Austria, breaking up the German Federation, subjecting the minor States, and giving Germany national unity under Prussia’s guidance. I have come here in order to tell the Queen’s Ministers this.’ Disraeli’s commentary on this programme was : ‘Take care of that man. He means what he says.’”

Already at the London Conference of next year (1863), as Poschinger remarks, Lord John Russell was to experience the truth of this remark.

But from the pen of Mr. Disraeli himself we have

what is probably a truer account of what Bismarck said to him on this occasion. For there can be little doubt that Lord Beaconsfield did his Prussian friend the honour of making him one of the characters (Count Ferroll, *quasi à ferro et igni*) in his *Endymion*.

"The Count of Ferroll about this time made a visit to England. He was always a welcome guest there, and received the greatest distinction which England could bestow upon a foreigner; he had been elected an honorary member of White's. 'You may have troubles here,' he said to Lady Montfort, 'but they will pass; you will have mealy potatoes again and plenty of bank-notes, but we shall not get off so cheaply. Everything is quite rotten throughout the Continent. This year is tranquillity to what the next will be. There is not a throne in Europe worth a year's purchase. My worthy master wants me to return home and be Minister; I am to fashion for him a new constitution. I will never have anything to do with new constitutions; their inventors are always the first victims. Instead of making a constitution he should make a country, and convert his heterogeneous domains into a patriotic dominion.' 'But how is that to be done?' 'There is only one way; by blood and iron.' 'My dear Count, you shock me!' 'I shall have to shock you a great deal more before the inevitable is brought about.'"

Bismarck once told Lord Bloomfield that he had the highest opinion of Charles Matthews, the actor. It turned out that this opinion was not based on any particular admiration for Matthews's professional talent, but for his coolness during a theatrical

riot which Bismarck witnessed during his visit to London.

Soon after returning from London to his post at Paris, Bismarck started off on a Pyrenean tour, and at Avignon (Sept. 15th) he forgathered with a young Frankfort couple—Lüning by name—who were honeymooning in that romantic region.

"Excellency," said Herr Lüning, "I only saw you once in Frankfort, but I shall never forget the circumstance, or the excitement that was caused among our good citizens by the incident."

"Indeed? And what was that?"

"It was on the Zeil" (the chief promenade in Frankfort), "on the eve of the Austro-Italian war, and you were walking up and down arm-in-arm with the Italian Minister, Count Barral, to the horror of the Austrians and the Frankforters, who were counting on an alliance with Prussia."

"Yes," replied Bismarck, with a laugh, "and to the special horror of Count Rechberg" (the Austrian President of the Diet). "But the Austrians were sharper than I was, for next day I got a telegram ordering me to St. Petersburg."

After dining together at the Hôtel Beau Séjour, the three agreed to go for a drive; and Bismarck had but taken his seat at the side of the blooming young bride, opposite her husband, when a telegram was handed to him.\*

\* Two other telegrams reached Bismarck the same evening, one from an old Pomeranian friend and fellow-squire, Moritz von Blanckenburg: "*Periculum in morâ. Dépêchez-vous! L'ami de Maurice Henning*"; and another from the War Minister, General von Roon: "The fruit is ripe."



It was a message from King William, summoning him to return at once to Berlin and assume the post of Minister-President.

The Chamber had again rejected the estimates for a reformed army—the condition precedent of all other reforms—and the King was in despair.

Bismarck made no secret of the contents of his telegram, and expressed the hope that he would yet succeed in reconciling the Government and the Chamber.

But he would not interrupt the drive, which presently led across the fine suspension bridge of the Rhone and along the bank of the noble river to a locality lovely with vineyards and olive groves, where the party got out of their vehicle to take a stroll and enjoy the balmy evening air.

Suddenly Madame Lüning stopped, and, breaking off a double twig from a young olive tree, offered it to Bismarck with the words: "May this help you to make it up with your opponents!"

"I will accept the half of it," gallantly replied Bismarck, with a smile, as he returned the lady the other, saying: "May this other half, with this rose, bring you, dear madam, constant peace in your happy marriage!"

Four days later he was in Berlin, and about the situation which there awaited him he afterwards said:

"When I arrived in Berlin on September 19th, 1862, summoned by his Majesty from Paris, his abdication, already signed, lay on his writing-table. I refused to take office. The document was ready for handing to the Crown Prince. The King asked me

whether I was prepared to govern against a majority of the Chamber even without a Budget. I answered 'Yes,' and the letter of abdication was destroyed.

"But even then the struggle was not over. A fortnight after, the King wrote to me from Baden in a state of intense despondency. I went to meet him on his way back to Berlin, and waited for him at Jüterbog station. The platform was quite dark. I could not find the Royal carriage. In those days we did not travel in special trains. At last I found the King sitting in an ordinary first-class compartment. He was terribly depressed. The Queen had pointed to the lessons of history. I pointed to the Prussian officer's sword which he wore. 'What is going to happen?' he exclaimed. 'I can see far enough from the palace window to behold your head fall on the scaffold, and after yours—mine.'

"'Well,' I replied, 'for myself I cannot imagine a nobler death than that, or on the battlefield. I should fall like Strafford, and your Majesty like Charles I., not like Louis XVI. Surely your Majesty, as captain of a company, cannot think of deserting it under fire?' 'Never,' was the reply, and the King sprang up resolute and erect. The Prussian officer's sword had carried the day, and I had won back my King. Such was the serious character of the times we then went through, and such was the stake my noble master risked in order to lay the foundation-stone of our military organisation."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### *BLOOD AND IRON.*

WITHIN a fortnight of his meeting with the Lünings at Avignon, Bismarck had made his first speech at a sitting of the Budget Committee.

Military reform, he argued, was above all things requisite for a "national policy."

To this the objection was urged that it would be much better of the Government to aim at making moral conquests in Germany by a Liberal policy.

Thereupon Bismarck produced his pocket-book, and took from it a little twig with a few dried leaves upon it.

"I brought this olive-leaf with me from Avignon," he said, "in order to offer it to the Progressists (Radicals) as a symbol of peace, but I see that I am much too soon with it."

And on this assurance being only received with a smile, Bismarck roused himself to sterner speech.

"Germany," he said, "does not look to the Liberalism, but to the power of Prussia, and Prussia must pull herself together so as not again to miss the favourable moment. Not by speechifying and resolutions, as in 1848 and 1849, can the great questions of the time be decided, but by *blood and iron.*"

And with that he crushed the withered olive leaves in the palm of his hand, sprinkling their dust upon the floor—such the history of the famous olive-twigg of Avignon, as well as of the still more famous phrase which characterised the policy that was to make Germany one.

Conversing soon after this with a Hessian deputy (Dr. Friedrich Oetker) Bismarck complained that his meaning had been perverted in the report of his speech. "Blood," for example, he had only used as a synonym for "soldiers."

"Here," said Oetker, "I remarked that I was also quite of the opinion that we should not achieve our purpose without 'blood and iron,' nay, without much blood—Bismarck listening in a kind of reverie."

Then he said that he was no longer the young fellow who, in 1848, had placed himself in opposition to the barricade-fighters. Every one, he said, was influenced by his education, but at Frankfort his eyes had been opened. For the rest, he had simply taken office in order to obviate recourse to extreme measures.

Dr. Oetker said this was precisely what he himself had fancied, and that he never for a moment thought of crediting the new Premier with plans in the sense of the *Kreuz-Zeitung*.

"God forbid!" exclaimed Bismarck with the utmost warmth, as he proceeded to apply the vilest and most opprobrious terms of abuse to the journal to which he himself had once been a constant contributor.

The *Kreuz-Zeitung* was now no longer under the control of its founder and first editor, Herr Wagener, who had been one of Bismarck's most intimate friends during the anti-revolutionary time (*"Nous ne voulons pas la contre-revolution, mais le contraire de la revolution,"* Bismarck had said); and Wagener was the first person he asked to dine with him on becoming Premier. On this occasion Bismarck set forth the aims of his policy, saying that he would not adhere to it if he thought it was at all possible for the re-organised Prussian army to be beaten. "Everything in our military system can be copied—everything but the Prussian officer."

In reply to a remark of Wagener, who could not help expressing his admiration of the combined boldness, caution, and self-confidence with which Bismarck had at once buckled to his work, the latter said:

"I am now devoting myself to foreign policy in the same way as I used to do my snipe-shooting—that is to say, I never take another step forward without feeling quite sure of the peat-heap on which I want to gain a fresh footing."

On a subsequent occasion—which we may here anticipate—Bismarck offered another explanation of what he had meant by his "blood and iron" phrase.

"My greatest triumph," he exclaimed, "is to have obtained from the King of Prussia the declaration of war against Austria, and the permission to convoke a German Parliament. Leave the rest to the future, and do not ask me why I could not achieve this, my highest aim, without turning

the Chamber and the Press against me. There are great things which no discussions or votes can give us. To obtain them, we must have five hundred thousand bayonets."

This was said in table-talk fashion at one of the committee sittings of the Chamber, where he liked best to let himself go just as the humour—now reckless and defiant, now winning and genial—might seize him. The unconstrained talk which he could indulge in with closed doors suited his disposition much better than public oratory. "At such times," said a witness to these discussions, "everything passed before our eyes in kaleidoscopic confusion, and with such rapidity that it was impossible to follow. There was a strange contrast between the grave and matter-of-fact talk of the commissioners and the brilliant rattle of the Minister, with its strong sprinkling of foreign words."

His power of work was at this time truly tremendous, though, like Dr. Johnson, he preferred idleness to work if that were possible.

An old acquaintance, who met Bismarck at this time and asked him how he was, received for reply: "How should I be? You know how I love to be lazy, and how I have to work!"

"I remember you in my boyish days very well," said Bismarck to Dr. von Arnim, Body-Physician to Prince Albrecht; "you then struck me with your enormous energy."

"That is completely altered," replied von Arnim quietly, "for now you strike me enormously with yours."

"How is it," King William once asked his new Minister-President and his cousin Herr von Bismarck-Briest, "that the Bismarcks of Schönhausen are all such tall, strapping fellows, and those of Briest just the contrary?"

"Because my ancestors," replied Bismarck, "all served the King as soldiers in battle, while my cousins were engaged in civil affairs!"

Herr von Bismarck-Briest promptly added, "That is precisely why I have put my seven sons into the army."

That Bismarck himself hated civil affairs and would have preferred to be a soldier—a preference to which he often gave expression—may be inferred from the following letter, which he sat down to indite to his old Göttingen friend, Motley, amid all the Babel of a debate in the Chamber of Deputies:—

"I hate politics; but, as you say truly, like the grocer hating figs, I am none the less obliged to keep my thoughts increasingly occupied with those figs. Even at this moment, while I am writing to you, my ears are full of it. I am obliged to listen to particularly tasteless speeches out of the mouths of uncommonly childish and excited politicians, and I have therefore a moment of unwilling leisure which I cannot use better than by giving you news of my welfare.

"I never thought that in my riper years I should be obliged to carry on such an unworthy trade as that of a Parliamentary Minister. As Envoy, though only an official, I still had the feeling of being a gentleman; as Parliamentary Minister one is a helot. I have come down in the world and hardly know how. . . . I am sitting again in the House of Phrases,

hear people talk nonsense, and end my letter. All these people have agreed to approve our treaties with Belgium, in spite of which twenty speakers scold each other with the greatest vehemence, as if each wished to make an end of the other; they are not agreed about the motives which make them unanimous; hence, alas! a regular German squabble about the Emperor's beard—*querelle d'Allemand*. . . .”

This was about the time of the Polish insurrection (March 1863), and on this subject Bismarck entered into conversation with a deputy at a Court ball.

“There were two ways,” he said, “of treating the Polish question: Prussia might either join hands with Russia to suppress the rebellion at once, and thus create a *fait accompli*, which the Western Powers would have no choice but recognise; or the Russians and the Poles might be left to fight it out by themselves, after which, if the Russians begged for help, or were beaten altogether, we might march into and take possession of Poland.”

Hereupon the deputy, in some amazement, asked whether he was being treated to a carnival jest.

“Not at all,” replied Bismarck. “I am most serious. Russia has long been sick and tired of Poland. When I was Minister in St. Petersburg, Alexander II. himself once told me that Russia, the most uncivilised of nations, could not govern a civilised people like the Poles, though the Germans might be able to do so. In time we would Germanise Poland, though the union between the two countries might only be a personal one, and the Polish deputies would no longer sit here” (in Berlin), “but in Warsaw.”



On the same occasion Herr von Oetker expressed the hope that an end would now soon be put to the conflict between Crown and Chamber about the army estimates, a conflict which absorbed so much of the Premier's energy.

"There you are right," exclaimed Bismarck; "but with such people as our present parliamentarians no agreement is possible. These professors think they know everything better than I do, and want to have a say in everything; but that won't do in politics."

Then he went on to abuse the Liberals.

"But, Excellency," put in Oetker, "you forget that I, too, am a Liberal."

"Ah, yes, that may be," rejoined the Premier, "but then you are a man of sound common-sense and not a mere hobby-horse rider. You start from the left, I from the right, and we are sure to meet on common ground. But as for the professors!"

Of these Bismarck always had a holy horror. "You must not take me for a Heidelberg professor," he once said to Prince Napoleon; and his general views on the class might be summed up in the epigram:

"Gott weiss viel,  
Doch mehr der Herr Professor;  
Gott weiss alles,  
Doch er—alles besser."

Of which the meaning might be rendered or, at least, illustrated, by the Oxford epigram:

"Look at me, my name is Jowett,  
I am the Master of Balliol College;  
All that can be known, I know it,  
And what I know not is not knowledge."

Once about this time a doctrinaire politician advanced a very paradoxical statement at Bismarck's dinner-table, and one of the guests set himself to refute it. "Pray don't trouble yourself," exclaimed the Premier. "If you will only have patience for two or three minutes, the learned Herr Professor will contradict himself in the most brilliant manner!"

On another occasion Bismarck said to Professor Virchow, "You perhaps imagine that you understand the national policy better than I do; but I know that I understand better than you or the Chamber what I call political policy (*die politische Politik*)."

Bismarck had to say the same thing, a hundred times over, to Count Beust, a great opponent of his national policy, of whom he was afterwards to remark at the table of an old sporting friend, Herr von Dietze-Barby, when asked his opinion of the Saxon Minister, "Well, when I wish to estimate the danger that is likely to accrue to me from any adversary, I first of all subtract the man's vanity from his other qualities; and if I do this in the case of Beust, there is little or nothing left."

Previous to this, Beust had gone to the Prussian capital to treat with Bismarck on certain political matters. "Unrequited affection," he wrote in his *Memoirs*, "did not prevent my going to Berlin some months later. . . . My reception was very polite and even cordial. I remember our walking one evening near the Wallner Theatre, and pursuing our conversation. We heard peals of laughter issuing from the

building, and Bismarck said, 'They are making bad jokes about us.' Farces were then being performed at Berlin in which I appeared as one of the characters, and I expressed a wish to see myself represented on the stage by the actor Helmerding, a wish that was not gratified."

A little later in the same year (1863), there was held at Frankfort a great "Congress of Princes" for the purpose of making a final effort to achieve federal reform, in the Austrian and Saxon sense of the term, without recourse to "blood and iron." But King William—acting under advice from his "political doctor," as he called his Premier ("*Voilà mon médecin!*") he had once exclaimed, on a Russian princess congratulating him on the great improvement of his looks)—had scorned to be a party to what Bismarck described as mere "wind-baggery." At the request of his fellow-sovereigns, King John of Saxony went to Baden to try to induce the King of Prussia to go to Frankfort, but the latter, with Bismarck at his elbow, was inexorable.

"I had the honour," wrote Beust, "of accompanying his Saxon Majesty. It was my task to interview Herr von Bismarck. We arrived in the afternoon. I looked for Bismarck at the 'Stephanienbad,' where Napoleon had stayed in 1860. He was out, but soon returned. It was late, and Bismarck asked me to stay for dinner, an invitation which I gladly accepted.

"His first words were, 'You come to drag us down to perdition; but you won't succeed.'

"'I do not understand you,' I rejoined. 'If your King goes to Frankfort to-morrow, appears in

the Congress, and greets the Princes with hearty words, saying that he is ready to take part in their deliberations, but that, as he has gone through two severe courses of medical treatment, he must request them to excuse him for a while, and will return some weeks later, the Congress will leave Frankfort on the following day.'

"To which Bismarck replied, 'What you say is probable, very probable, but not certain.'

"When I began a further attempt to persuade him, with the words, 'Hitherto you have given me your confidence,' he interrupted me, saying, 'I have lost all confidence in you since you made your speech at Leipzig.'\*

"As it is his habit to assume a jesting tone, even when he is most annoyed, he added, 'In this way you only mislead your friends. You had no truer friend in Prussia than General Manteuffel. On reading your speech, he was taken ill, and had to keep his bed for twenty-four hours, during which he exclaimed incessantly, "How mistaken one can be in such a man!"'

"Of his own Sovereign he only said: 'The King became very sulky at the prospect of a visit from your master. He says, "If they had only sent me my son-in-law' (Grand Duke of Baden), 'I should have rated him soundly; but they actually send me the venerable King of Saxony!'"

"The composition of the King's reply, in which he

\* At a festival held in 1863 by the Gymnastic Societies of Germany.

refused to accept the invitation signed by all the Princes, must have given a great deal of trouble, for Herr von Bismarck did not bring it to me till late at night. A special train soon took us back to Frankfort"—*re infectâ*.

Then came the Danish war, of which Bismarck was afterwards to say: "When I was made a Prince the King insisted on putting Alsace-Lorraine into my coat-of-arms. But I would much rather have had Schleswig-Holstein, for that is the campaign, politically speaking, of which I am proudest." His method of conducting the diplomacy of this campaign was well illustrated by his billiard-room interview with Prince Frederick of Augustenburg, the Legitimist claimant of the Duchies, whose daughter, Princess Victoria, was destined one day to become German Empress, as the wife of William II. This Pretender went to Berlin to treat with Bismarck about his claims, and it was then that he heard, from the mouth of the Prussian Premier, first mention of that project which has now been realised in the Canal uniting the Baltic and North Sea. But Prince Frederick would not yield to all the Premier's demands in connection with the matter.

"At first," said Bismarck afterwards, "I wanted from him no more than what the minor Princes conceded in 1866. But he would not yield an inch (thank Heaven, thought I to myself, and thanks to the wisdom of his legal advisers). At first I called him 'Highness,' and was altogether very polite. But when he began to make objections about Kiel Harbour, which we wanted, and would listen to none

of our military demands, I put on a different face. I now titled him 'Serene Highness,' and told him at last quite coolly that we could easily wring the neck of the chicken which we ourselves had hatched."

But amid all his war worries Bismarck could find the heart to write (in English) such a rollicking note as this, rollicking as his table-talk, to his old Göttingen friend, now the brilliant historian of the "Dutch Republic":—

"JACK MY DEAR,—Where the Devil are you, and what do you do that you never write a line to me? I am working from morn to night like a nigger, and you have nothing to do at all—you might as well tip me a line instead of looking at your feet tilted against the wall of God knows what a dreary colour. I cannot entertain a regular correspondence; it happens to me that during five days I do not find a quarter of an hour for a walk; but you, lazy old chap, what keeps you from thinking of your old friends? Why do you never come to Berlin? I swear that I will make time to look with you on old Logier's quarters, and drink a bottle with you at Gerolt's, where they once would not allow you to put your slender legs upon a chair. Let politics be hanged and come and see me. I promise that the Union Jack shall wave over our house, and conversation and the best old hock shall pour damnation upon the rebels. *Sei gut und komm oder schreibe.*

"Dein V. BISMARCK

"Haunted by the old song, 'In good old Colony Times,'"—

Of which the first verse ran :—

“In good old colony times,  
When we lived under a king,  
Three roguish chaps  
Fell into mishaps,  
Because they could not sing.”

At the outset of the Danish war old Field-Marshal, or “Papa,” Wrangel was at the head of operations. There was some fear that the Western Powers might object to the German troops entering Jutland ; in consequence of which a telegram was sent to the Field-Marshal, bidding him advance no farther, who thereupon wired back to King William that “these diplomatists, who spoil the most successful operations, deserved the gallows.” Bismarck took care to ignore Wrangel’s presence whenever he met him on later occasions, which could not fail to annoy him. One day, however, they met at dinner, having both been invited to the King’s table. It was a peculiarity of Wrangel that he always called everybody “Du,” or “thou” ; and, turning to Bismarck, who was seated next to him, he said : “My son, canst thou not forget ?” “No,” was the curt reply. After a short pause Wrangel began again, “My son, canst thou not forgive ?” “With all my heart,” answered Bismarck ; and the two remained friends till Wrangel’s death.

But that Bismarck could forget as well as forgive was shown by the following incident, which happened about the same time :—

In the year 1863 a Princess Caroline of Reuss (younger line) had made bold to impose a special tax on her people in order to raise the wind for the

marriage outfit of one of her daughters, and the act was severely commented on in the Press. Among others, *Kladderadatsch*, the *Punch* of Berlin, published a caustic poem on the subject, for which its editor, Herr Dohm, was prosecuted by the Princess, and sentenced, after a year's fighting, to five weeks' imprisonment. But when he had "sat" for about four-fifths of this time, there appeared in the same comic print a cartoon, with the legend "*Crino—caro—line*," showing poor Dohm sitting, "cribbed, cabined, and confined," within the iron cage-like network of a huge crinoline (the fashion of the day), with his colleagues standing around full of sympathy. The King had been much amused by this cartoon, and Bismarck, who shared his master's feelings in the matter, had no difficulty in getting His Majesty to agree to the letting of Dohm out of gaol. So to the incarcerated editor he wrote:—

"I beg to inform you that His Majesty the King has just seen fit to remit the remainder of your five weeks' imprisonment. Apart from yesterday's ceremony" (the triumphal entry of the troops from Schleswig-Holstein and the consequent graciousness of His Majesty's mood), "the charming cartoon in your last issue has not been without influence on this decision. But may I combine a personal request with this intimation, and beg you now to leave poor Caroline alone?"

For his services in connection with the Treaty of Vienna, resulting from the Danish war, Bismarck had been decorated with the Black Eagle. Among those who had written to congratulate him on this great



honour was Dr. Bonnell, with whom he had boarded when attending the Grey Friars' Gymnasium at Berlin, in 1831; and the Minister-President went to take tea with his revered old teacher, in order to return his thanks in person. On this occasion he had much to say about the charms of Biarritz, where he had lately been again, and referred to the numerous threatening letters that reached him, though these he despised and disregarded, as no party, he said, had ever yet gained any advantage from political murder.

Then he told of a curious dream which he had at Biarritz. He had, he said, been ascending a mountain path, which grew ever narrower till at last he came to a high wall, at its side being a deep abyss. For a moment he stood reflecting whether he should not turn back; but then he struck out with his walking-stick at the wall, which at once disappeared, leaving his path open and unimpeded—an encouraging omen, he added, for the difficulties that were in store for him.

But there was another walking-stick which about this time seemed to Bismarck to be of still better omen, and that was one which he had received from King William as a Christmas present—probably in consequence of his Premier having also repeated to him his Biarritz dream. In acknowledging this gift Bismarck wrote:—

“I thank your Majesty most respectfully and warmly for so graciously remembering me to-day. . . . I firmly trust that God will make your Majesty's staff blossom in Germany like Aaron's rod, whereof we read in the seventeenth chapter of Numbers, and that, if necessary, it will also transform itself

into the serpent which swallows up the others, as in the seventh chapter of Exodus.

"I would ask your Majesty to forgive this allusion, into which I have been led by my feelings of gratitude. This being Christmas-time I feel constrained to assure your Majesty that my fidelity and obedience to the master God has given me on earth rest on the same firm foundation as my religious faith. In deepest reverence and unchangeable fidelity, I remain till death your Majesty's most obedient servant, BISMARCK."

Of Bismarck's visit to Biarritz, as above referred to, we get an interesting glimpse from Jules Hansen, a Danish journalist employed to manipulate the European Press in favour of his country during the Schleswig-Holstein trouble.

"The Prussian Minister occupied the ground floor of the famous and now historic *Maison Rouge*, situated on the shore of the Bay of Biscay, at the foot of the hill on which stood the villa of the Emperor. On my entering his *cabinet de travail* I found him chatting with Prince Orloff, then Russian Minister at Brussels, who soon withdrew and left me alone with M. de Bismarck. King William's Prime Minister was standing before a large table covered with maps and books, and he took up and began to play with a long Catalonian knife—a weapon, it may be remarked, which every visitor to Biarritz buys (as a souvenir) from the Spanish pedlars who hawk the country. This was the first time I had seen M. de Bismarck; but he

did not then make upon me the deep impression which he afterwards did. He even seemed to show some embarrassment in opening the conversation. But at last, after reading my letter of introduction, he began by abusing the Vicomte de La Guéronnière, from whom I had brought it.

“‘I cannot,’ he said, ‘admit the right of this *Monsieur*’ to introduce to me any one he likes. In the *France* he has told terrific lies about me, especially with regard to Polish affairs. But I receive you merely because you are a Dane, and although the Vicomte (with a Frenchman’s accuracy) calls you *Hausen* instead of *Hansen*. Your name is not unfamiliar to me. I know quite well that you have been hard on us Prussians in the French Press.’

“‘That is indeed quite true,’ I replied; ‘I have done all I could to make your position in France as uncomfortable as possible.’

“‘Well,’ he rejoined, ‘that is only to your credit. But what is the object of your visit?’”

Previous to this, in August 1864—soon after the close of the Danish campaign—Bismarck had gone to Vienna, and was treated to a dinner by Count Rechberg, Foreign Minister, at Kettenhoff, about an hour’s distance from the capital. Count Rechberg had chosen this place as the scene of his entertainment, as in Vienna itself he would not have been able to accord his distinguished visitor the seat of honour in the presence of the foreign ambassadors. At this dinner some one referred to Prince Gortchakoff as having, after living in Vienna for

some time in his youth as *attaché*, left the city with so unfavourable an impression of it as to affect all his future feelings towards Germany, and these were known to be anything but friendly. On this Bismarck remarked :

“ I cannot understand what influence the reception accorded to a representative of Russia in Vienna can have on his views in reference to Germany. We in Berlin consider Vienna at present as a non-German city, and what goes on in Vienna as having nothing to do with Germany. I know very well that the city of Vienna stands, properly speaking, in German territory, but it is the capital of a non-German Empire, and I protest against us Germans being made responsible for what happens in Vienna.”

Then, turning round with a somewhat ironical smile : “ I fear the place is badly chosen for making this confession of faith to you ; but, be sure, one gains nothing by closing one’s eyes to evident facts. It is manifest that the Austrian Monarchy is not very much German, when one compares the number of its German provinces with those which are non-German. Austria, therefore, would do much better to rely on the real force which lies in the alliance of her numerous peoples, than to pursue the dream of a sovereignty in Germany which we dispute with her, and to which she has no claim. What is German will, sooner or later, revert to Germany ; that is inevitable. It is no more difficult to govern Vienna from Berlin than to govern Buda-Pesth from Vienna. Indeed, it would be easier ;” all of

which was the boldest possible expression of the policy by which he was preparing to expel Austria from the Germanic Confederation altogether.

It was on this occasion that Motley (now American Minister at Vienna) wrote: "The only ripple we have had on our surface was when the bold Bismarck made his appearance. . . . He dined with us yesterday *en famille*, asking me to have no one else except Werther, the Prussian Minister, here, that we might talk of old times, and be boys again. . . . It was the greatest delight to me to see him again. We drank three bottles of claret (not apiece); but we sat till half-past nine, at table, much to the amazement of the servants; for what well-conducted domestic in Vienna can tolerate any remaining at table after the finger-bowls?"

Next year, on the occasion of another visit to Vienna, Herr von Schmerling, Austrian Minister of the Interior, who had a personal dislike to the Prussian Minister, refused to meet him at any of the Court dinners. Bismarck, noticing his absence, inquired the cause, and, being told that it was ill-health, he replied, "Ah! I always thought there was something the matter with his *Constitution*."

This was about the time of the Convention of Gastein, which Bismarck had devised as a crafty means of gaining time to complete his preparations for war with Austria. "It is well known," wrote Beust, "that the Saxon troops who were entrusted with the duty of carrying out the decision of the Bund were driven from Holstein without ceremony after the conclusion of the Peace of Vienna. In

the following year, 1865, I met Bismarck at Gastein. He spoke of this incident not without regret, but added, in a quotation from Schiller :

‘It is the curse of evil deeds  
That they must ever evil deeds beget.’

‘And,’ he continued, ‘had you and your friends not opposed our motion, your troops would have been the first in the field, and would have taken part in the storming of Düppel.’

“‘You are forgetting,’ I rejoined, ‘what might have happened had the Danes refused to fight.’

“‘I had taken precautions against that,’ was Bismarck’s answer. ‘I made the Cabinet of Copenhagen believe that England had threatened us with active intervention, if hostilities should be opened, although, as a matter of fact, England did nothing of the kind.’”

In the autumn of this same year (1865) Bismarck again returned to his beautiful Biarritz, where he had another interview with Napoleon. After a *déjeuner* to which he was treated by the Emperor, the latter took occasion to ask what would be Prussia’s attitude to the troubles in the Danubian Principalities—his Majesty’s *arrière-pensée* evidently being that these territories might ultimately be used as a means of compensating Austria for the possible loss of Venetia.

Bismarck answered that Prussia’s direct interest in the fate of these Danubian lands did not meanwhile go beyond the safeguarding of German trade therein, and that her share in the re-fashioning of their future

fate must be conditioned by the necessity of her not getting into trouble with Russia about a question of comparatively minor moment to her. The friendliness of the relations already existing between Prussia and her Northern neighbour, and the importance of maintaining these, made it incumbent on her not to undermine the mutual trust which had long united the two Courts—a view which the Emperor seemed to think sensible enough.

His Majesty then expatiated on the interest which Europe had in preventing the spread of contagious diseases—such as the cholera—which had their origin in the pilgrimages to Mecca, and were thus brought to the West by home-returning worshippers of the Prophet. By common action the European Powers might do much to counteract this evil, and Prussia, he hoped, would not prove behind-hand with her co-operation.

To this Bismarck replied that, though not blind to the danger of thus interfering with the ways of Mohammedan fanaticism, he nevertheless thought he could assure the Emperor, in a general way, that Prussia would be ready to lend her hand to every civilising work of the kind referred to, so far as it was possible for her to make her influence felt in those remote regions.

Having sounded, and, as he thought, won over the Emperor to his plans for picking a quarrel with Austria, Bismarck returned home.

*"Il n'y a que M. de Bismarck qui soit un vrai grand homme,"* wrote Merimée at this time to his *"Inconnue."*

"He has quite won me ; as, indeed, he also captivated

Napoleon himself by his frankness and the charm of his manners."

He returned to Berlin, and at once began to prepare for action.

"Do you mean to break the Convention of Gastein," bluntly demanded the Austrian ambassador Count Karolyi, of the Prussian Minister-President.

"No," replied the latter, with equal directness; "but even if I did, do you suppose I should be such a fool as to tell you?"

On a previous occasion Bismarck had spoken to Count Karolyi with perfect candour.

"The relations of the two Powers," he said, "cannot continue on their present footing. They must change either for the better or the worse. It is the honest desire of the King's Government that they should change for the better, but if the necessary advances are not made by the Imperial Cabinet, it will be requisite for Prussia to look the other alternative in the face, and to make her preparations accordingly."

"Finally," wrote Count Karolyi, a few weeks later, "Bismarck placed before us, in so many words, the alternative of withdrawing from Germany and transferring our centre of gravity to Ofen (Buda-Pesth), or of seeing Prussia in the ranks of our enemies on the occasion of the first European war."

One of these enemies was Italy, and Bismarck determined to secure her assistance in his impending conflict with the common foe.

On March 17th, 1866, in the Italian Embassy at Berlin, Bismarck met at dinner General Govone, who



had come from Florence on a special mission, connected with the approaching war.

Conversing with the General on this subject, Bismarck said that nothing had embittered the Court of Vienna so much as the suspicion that Prussia was secretly negotiating with Italy. Thus, if Prussia had not yet burned her ships behind her, these were already in flames; and he could therefore offer him (Govone) his complete confidence in the matter of the proposed treaty, seeing that His Majesty King William was without doubt the very last Sovereign in all Europe who would ever think of repudiating his obligations. It was also clear, added Bismarck, that the Italian question had reached a much riper stage than the German one, and perhaps therefore it would be better for the spark, which was first to fire the powder-cask, to emanate from Italy.

In reply, General Govone said that Italy, just then, was not inclined to adopt such a course. Public opinion, which was in the highest degree sound and sensible, was all in favour, meanwhile, of the administrative and financial reform of the country, as knowing well that, when this was finished, other political questions would settle themselves of their own accord. At the same time, however, public opinion would doubtless welcome a favourable and unforeseen opportunity of anticipating this solution of the Venetian question, and it was from this point of view that the Italian Minister-President, La Marmora, had sent him to Berlin, in the belief that Prussia was preparing for war. But the Italian Government

was so convinced of the necessity of not acting rashly, that it could not assume any initiative of the kind which Bismarck had suggested.

Bismarck rejoined : " Oh, but you can wait. Your finances do not force you to hurry on a settlement, and you can join with us in accordance with the plan of common action which I have sketched out for you."

" I believe," said Govone, " that the Government of Florence would refuse to wait (with the reform of its finances), and in the meantime assume obligations towards Prussia for remote eventualities, as it might happen that, in order to remain true to her sacred treaty word, Italy might have to sacrifice other interests. Just think for a moment, your Excellency, of the possibility of circumstances forcing us to deal, within six months, with the Roman question, and you will admit the justice of our scruples."

But such was the persuasiveness of Bismarck's diplomacy that, within three weeks of this conversation, Prussia and Italy had signed the offensive and defensive treaty, but for which the Bohemian campaign might have taken a very different course.

It was about this time, when war with Austria only seemed a question of a few weeks or months, that Bismarck went to dine with the Saxon envoy (Count Hohenthal), whose sympathies, of course, were all with Austria.

" Pray tell me, your Excellency," said his hostess to him, with charming frankness, " is it really true that you mean to go to war with Austria, and make a conquest of Saxony ? "

"Certainly, my dearest Countess," replied Bismarck, with equal candour, "it is perfectly true. From the very first day I took office I never thought of anything else. Our guns are now all ready, and you shall soon see that they are superior to the Austrian artillery."

"Oh, how frightful!" exclaimed the Countess. "But now that you are in such a candid mood, will you also give me a friendly piece of advice? We have two estates, and I want to know which of them I should fly to—the one in Bohemia, or the other near Leipzig?"

"If you will take my advice," replied Bismarck, "do not go to Bohemia, for it is there, and precisely in the neighbourhood of your estate, that we shall fight the Austrians, so that you might have all sorts of terrible adventures. You had better therefore go quietly to Saxony, for there will be nothing doing near Leipzig, and you will not even be bothered with the billeting of troops, as your château does not lie on any military road."

When Bismarck was afterwards anxiously questioned by other diplomatists as to this conversation, he was much amused that the mocking repulse of an indiscreet question should be taken seriously. But Herr von Beust, remembering his long enmity against the policy of Prussia, really took up the matter in earnest, sent the important news to Vienna, demanded Austria's protection, and declared that, if Austria would arm at once, all the Middle States would stand firmly by her, but that otherwise they would turn their backs on her for ever. The communica-

tion was not without influence on the military circles of Vienna.

In table-conversation with Lord Augustus Loftus, the English ambassador, about this time, when things had come to look very black between Austria and Prussia, Bismarck said that he meditated no act of violence. The position now simply was that the alliance between the two Powers was at an end. Their relations, said the Count, might be characterised by the words of Richelieu to his discarded mistress: '*Nous ne sommes pas ennemis; mais nous ne nous aimons plus.*'"

On another occasion Bismarck complained to the English ambassador that it was Austria who was the threatening Power, and would attack Prussia when ready for the fray.

"What would you do," inquired the Count, "if you found a violent, dangerous man in the street, threatening the public security and peace?"

The ambassador replied that he should immediately call the police, and in his estimation the Powers constituted the police of Europe, for the maintenance of peace.

"But," said Bismarck, "if it were the case of a gentleman, you would give him your card."

The ambassador replied, "I think not."

At a full-dress banquet given by the ambassador on the Queen's birthday, Bismarck, in talking to his host on the subject of peace and war, remarked: "Why, after all, Attila was a greater man than your John Bright. He has left a greater name in history. The Duke of Wellington will be known

in history as a great warrior, and not as a pacific statesman."

Perhaps Bismarck's table-talk was never livelier than on the day (May 7th, 1866) when he was shot at just opposite the Russian Embassy, Unter den Linden, by a fanatic, Ferdinand Cohen (the stepson of Karl Blind, a democratic fugitive of 1848, living in London), who thus hoped that he might be able to rid Germany of the man who was threatening to disturb its peace. Arrived home, Bismarck sat down and wrote a brief account of the incident to the King, and then, entering the drawing-room, greeted the several guests assembled for dinner as if nothing had happened. "I have been shot at, my child," he at last whispered to his wife; "but never mind, there's no harm done. Let us go in to dinner."

The marvellous escape of the Minister-President naturally formed the topic of excited conversation at table, and after dinner, in the drawing-room, the Countess expressed her opinion of the would-be assassin by energetically avowing that if "she were in heaven, and saw the villain standing on the top of a ladder leading down to hell, she would have no hesitation in giving him a push."

"Hush, my dear," whispered her husband, tapping her gently on the shoulder from behind; "you would not be in heaven yourself with such thoughts as these!"

Among the numerous congratulations which poured in upon Bismarck after this "*attentat*" was one from the Marquis Wielpolski who, in 1861, had held a Ministerial portfolio at Warsaw, and been himself the

object of a similar attack. "Despite my business," replied Bismarck, "which leaves me not a moment's rest day or night, I cannot refrain from personally thanking you for the congratulation and the good wishes with which you were kind enough to honour me. You yourself know from experience what sort of a life I have ; its dangers, its ingratitude, its privations, insufficiency of time and strength—and amidst all that the only consolation one has is the doing of one's duty and living up to the vocation which God has given us. Think not that discouragement makes me speak thus, for I believe in victory without knowing whether I shall live to see it ; but I am often overcome with a feeling of weariness."

Some declared that Bismarck had owed his wonderful escape to the fact that, like Cromwell, he had "bought his linen from the ironmonger." But that was not so. Referring to this attempt on his life, Bismarck afterwards said : "Strange to say, on the day I was shot at I had no weapon by me—not even a stick. I was always accustomed to carry a loaded revolver in my pocket, and to go along the streets with my hand on the butt end. I should not have liked to take the long journey to Eternity alone."

In the previous autumn, as we saw, Bismarck, quoting Schiller, had said to Beust :—

" It is the curse of evil deeds  
That they must ever evil deeds beget ; "

and one consequence of Blind's attempt to assassinate him was that threatening letters now began to pour

in upon him from nearly every country in Europe, especially from Germany.\* But these he despised, and disregarded, as he had told Dr. Bonnell, since "no party had ever gained any advantage yet from political murder!"

"At the present moment," he remarked about this time, "people would like to string me up, but in a few

\* Here are two specimens:—

"BERLIN, *May 8th*, 1866.

"EXCELLENCY,—Yesterday a thoughtless youth (Ferdinand Blind) tried to take your life, but he should have acted more warily, and then he would not have missed his mark. Nevertheless, as a good Prussian and patriot, I will endeavour to warn you ere it is too late.

"A number of the best and noblest young men in Prussia have vowed to take you off, and one of them will certainly manage to do so. Surround yourself as you like with constables and detectives—that won't help. You must die for the good of the Fatherland, even if it should be in the same manner as Minister Latour came to an end at Vienna in 1848.

"Excellency! There is only one means of saving you. Give the world peace; resign your office, and flee the country, so that the honour of Prussia may thus be saved, and not smudged with murder and death.

"Excellency! Make not light of this letter, for it is written in all seriousness, and comes from the heart of a Prussian who loves his country, and does not wish to see it become the scene of the most frightful revolution.

"Once more, your Excellency, save your life!"

"BERLIN, *May 18th*, 1866.

"HERR GRAF,—I have just learned that you are to be shot on Saturday evening. Ten men are ready to murder you as soon as peace is broken.

"Even your wife must die with you.

"R. v R."

years I shall be the most popular man in all Germany."

While thus the scale of war was slowly making that of peace to kick the beam, Bismarck made the acquaintance of a Hanoverian, Dr. Miquel, a man who was long afterwards to become Prussian Minister of Finance.

"You are a Hanoverian deputy," said Bismarck, "and I should like to know what you think of the prospects of our maintaining friendly relations with your country."

"Excellency, I can say nothing about that. I belong to the Opposition, and have no touch with our Court, neither do I know its views. You must apply to your envoy for that."

"We fought shoulder to shoulder with Hanover," rejoined Bismarck, "in the Seven Years' War and the Liberation War. But if a conflict now arises—and I am by no means sure about it—Prussia will be in a very ticklish position. We can only hope, earnestly hope, that Hanover will remain neutral—more we ask not—and show a disposition to take part in the reform of our federal relations, which cannot possibly remain as they are."

Conversing about the same subject, on the very eve of the war, with Dr. von Gerlach, a judge of appeal, a prominent Conservative, and a great champion of the Legitimist principle, Bismarck said :

"You know what kind of promises the King of Hanover has been exacting of the Austrians ; and can you, then, really expect of the Prussian Government that it will treat this Sovereign—to whom Germany



is nothing but a phrase—as if we had merely been jesting with one another ? ”

“Are you not afraid,” replied Von Gerlach, “of thus entering on the path of international revolution, and bringing about in Germany a state of things similar to that which we now unfortunately have in Italy ? ”

“I can quite understand,” rejoined Bismarck, “that you, as an old soldier of the Napoleonic wars, shrink from the thought of our crossing swords with Austria, and that you cannot familiarise yourself with the idea of seeing the German Bund disappear, and with it a triumvirate of German Sovereigns. But pray, at the same time, do not forget how Prussia has been treated by this Bund, and that it is not the fault of its members if we have not already been thrown back to the position we occupied before the Seven Years’ War.”

“I am afraid,” persisted Gerlach, “that your Excellency is about to embark on a very perilous course, conjuring up spirits which you will find it difficult to lay. I cannot follow you on the path you are taking, and am now too old to change my ideas like a soiled garment.

“It will be a bitter pain to me,” concluded Bismarck, “if our roads diverge, and if you should feel bound, as I suppose you will, to oppose me openly. But my resolution is inflexible. I can now no longer look back, but only forward, and I shall stand or fall with my policy.”

The die was now cast, and the rivalry of the two leading German Powers had to be decided by the sword. “I was with Count Bismarck,” wrote Lord A.

Loftus, "late on the evening of June 15th. We had been walking and sitting in his garden till a late hour, when to my astonishment it struck midnight. Count Bismarck took out his watch and said, '*A l'heure qu'il est, nos troupes sont entrées en Hanovre, Saxe, et Hesse-Cassel.*' He added: 'The struggle will be severe; Prussia may lose, but she will at least have fought bravely and honourably. If we are beaten I shall not return. I shall fall in the first charge. One can die but once, and, if beaten, it is better to die.'"

A fortnight afterwards, at a late hour on the night of June 29th, 1866, Bismarck entered his wife's drawing-room to join the circle of private friends who generally assembled there about this time, and rest a little from the Herculean labours of the day. The telegrams about the preliminary victories of the Prussians had put every one in the best of spirits, and naturally enough there was but one thing talked about by all present.

"Gentlemen," said Bismarck, after refreshing himself with a cup of tea, "I always considered it an axiom that, organised and commanded as it now is, the Prussian army is simply invincible, and thus it is that I have accepted our victories so far as a mere matter of course" (*Morgengabe*, gift on the morning after the nuptial day). "At the same time, I am in the hands of God, and will not laud the day until the night has come. My watchword continues to be, 'Never return, or only as victor!' If, therefore, I wish you an *au revoir*, I do not say so in a spirit of overweening pride, but with the reservation, 'if God so wills it.' But what affects me more painfully than

anything else is the consciousness that my policy seems to be least of all understood by those who used to be my best friends, as well as the prospect of this stiff and stubborn Prussian particularism of theirs proving the greatest obstacle to my work of building up our national unity. Help me, therefore, I beg of you, to put life into the national idea, and do not forget that, after our war with Austria, we shall probably have to engage in other struggles from which Germany, with her united strength, will emerge victorious."

"I do not quite understand thee," threw in Herr von Kleist-Retzow, an old Conservative friend and *Dutzbruder* (so intimate as to call each other "thou"), who had felt piqued by the reproaches of the Premier. "Hitherto we have unreservedly followed thee on all thy ways without asking any questions, and I do not well see what could now happen to change this attitude of ours."

"Think of our present conversation, my dear Hans," replied Bismarck, with a smile, "should it ever happen that I have to address myself to thee with an '*Et tu, Brute!*' Meanwhile I place all my hopes in the army, which will not only lead us to victory, but will also form the crystallising point for German unity, and secure to us our achievements on every side. But now, gentlemen, I must beg you to excuse me, as I shall probably have to greet the rising sun at my writing-desk."

Early next morning Bismarck, Moltke, and Roon, set out with the septuagenarian King William for Bohemia, where, in three days' time, they were to witness the "crowning victory" of Königgrätz.

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CHAPTER V.  
*KÖNIGGRÄTZ.*

“PLEASE send me a revolver, of large size, a holster-pistol,” Bismarck had written to his wife on the day before Königgrätz; “also a novel to read, but only one at a time”—which may be supplemented by the following extract:—

“M. Lefèvre de Behaine, who was Secretary of the French Embassy at Berlin, related the following tale to the Brothers De Goncourt, which occurs in their diary under the date June 10th, 1867: ‘That Bismarck is certainly an astonishing fellow! On my journey to Vienna, after the battle of Sadowa, I learned he was at Brünn. It was July 15th. I called upon him at two o’clock in the morning, and found him in bed. There was a table at his bedside, upon which two candles were burning and two books were lying. The man was reading; and what do you think he read? You will scarcely believe me when I tell you that it was Paul Feval’s *L’Hôtel Carnavalet*.’”

Bismarck himself gave an interesting account of his experiences in the war when he afterwards went with his family to the beautiful island of Rügen, in the Baltic, to recover from the fatigues of the campaign; and at a dinner given him by Prince Putbus, the

magnate of the place, the Count remarked, after finishing his oysters, that he had enjoyed no such delicacies in Bohemia, where it was sometimes even difficult to satisfy the pangs of hunger :—

“But as the King himself went through everything, so the soldier bore all privations and hardships easily. At the battle of Königgrätz, I was in the King's suite, and often enough we were in the midst of the turmoil of the fight. At midday there was a momentary lull in the roar of battle ; the Crown Prince was expected on the field—eagerly expected. During this anxious pause, the King asked his suite if any one had anything to eat—he was hungry. The groom had a little wine, an officer drew, rather shamefacedly, a diminutive piece of sausage from his haversack, and, with a beaming face, a soldier stepped up with a piece of *commisbrod* in his open hand. ‘My son, have you had your own dinner, then?’ asked the King. ‘No, your Majesty!’ ‘Then we will divide fairly.’ And the King broke the piece of bread into two pieces, returned one-half to the soldier saying, ‘Take it, my son ; your Sovereign thanks you.’ Not long after, the Crown Prince came up with his army, just at the nick of time, and hence our Platt-Deutsch soldiers ever afterwards called him ‘*Prinz taur rechten Teit*,’ ‘Prince Nick-of-Time.’

“After that the battle began to rage afresh. The attention of the King was wholly fixed on the progress of the battle, and he paid not the slightest heed to the shells that were whizzing thickly around him. To my repeated request that his Majesty might not so carelessly expose himself to so murderous a fire, he

only answered, 'The commander-in-chief must be where he ought to be.' Later on, at the village of Lipa, when the King in person had ordered the cavalry to advance, and the shells were again falling round him, I ventured to renew my request, saying, 'If your Majesty will take no care of your own person, have pity at least on your poor Minister-President, from whom your faithful Prussian people will again demand their King; and in the name of that people I entreat you to leave this dangerous spot.' Then the King gave me his hand, with a 'Well, then, Bismarck, let us ride on a little.' So saying, his Majesty wheeled his black mare and put her into as easy a canter as if he had been riding down the Linden to the Thiergarten. But for all that I felt very uneasy about him, . . . and so, edging up with my dark chestnut to Sadowa" (the name given to the King's mare *after* the battle), "I gave her a good (sly) kick from behind with the point of my boot; she made a bound forward, and the King looked round in astonishment. I think he saw what I had done, but he said nothing."\*

"Had your Excellency, then, a revolver with you during the war?"

\* "Count Bismarck," wrote Lord Augustus Loftus in his *Memoirs*, "told me that he remonstrated with his Majesty against the danger he was incurring when the balls were hissing around him, and on the King expressing his doubts as to their being bullets, Count Bismarck replied, '*Glauben Ihre Majestät dass es Schwalben sind?*'" ('Does your Majesty think they are swallows?') and urged the King more speedily beyond the range of fire, using his own spurs on the King's horse." That touch about the swallows was quite new.

"No; and I only once regretted not having one. It was soon after the battle of Königgrätz. I was riding alone over the dead-strewn field. It was a sight to freeze the blood in the veins—horrible, bloody, never to be forgotten. In one place I came upon a poor horse, a beautiful animal, both of whose hind-feet had been torn away by a shell. While trying to support himself upon his fore-feet, quivering and neighing piteously, he looked up at me with his great moist eyes, as if beseeching my help—and then I longed for a revolver to send a bullet into his heart, and so relieve him from his sufferings.

"But the battlefield was otherwise full of touching sights. For example, during the heat of the conflict, I saw a youthful officer, pale and fair, as if sleeping, leaning against a garden hedge. He was dead. Inside the garden the roses were in full bloom. A trooper was just plucking a handful. He then got over the hedge and placed the roses on the breast of the young hero, where a small round hole showed itself in his uniform.

"‘Do you know that young officer?’ said I.

"‘No, Major,’ he replied; ‘but I saw him fighting like a lion, and now fallen like a lamb; I thought that I would save him at least from the horses’ hoofs, and so I carried him to the hedge. We laid roses on my own dear mother when we placed her in the earth.’ So saying, he flung himself upon his horse, this brave trooper, and rushed madly into the heat of the battle.”

"But you also spoke of the comic side of things, *lieber Graf?*"

"Yes, dear Countess ; in spite of the seriousness of the situation, I never saw anything more comic than the caperings of the big regimental goat of the Berlin Guard Artillery, as it went careering about at the bugler's side, in the thickest of the bullet-rain, and making for the enemy with its grotesque leaps and bounds. The Austrians, too, are really said to have believed that the form of this goat had merely been assumed by Satan, with whom the wicked Bismarck had entered into a compact against their invincible Iron Brigade."

"Lieber Otto," here interposed the Countess Bismarck, "you mustn't touch that dish ; it's not good for your stomach in its present nervous state."

"Ladies," replied the Count, as he motioned away the proffered dish, "have you ever seen such a fine example of an obedient husband ?"

"Well, Countess," threw in Prince Putbus, "you have the happiness to be the only one, apart from the King, to whom our Iron Count submits."

"Oh, no," rejoined the Countess, "there is still another to whom Otto sometimes also bows."

"And who is this powerful person ?"

"Well, you will never guess ; it is—the cook."

"Ah, yes," observed Bismarck ; "it is surprising what a man will do to enjoy peace in his own house, after having had a thorough taste of war."

Then, proceeding to speak of the difficulties he sometimes had in finding sleeping accommodation, he said :

"Once I was even compelled to camp in a village market-place. I arrived after dark, and quite alone,



in an abominable hole of a Bohemian village, with an unpronounceable name. I had left the King to spend the night upon a hard sofa. No lights to be seen in any of the houses, and all of them closed. I knocked at half a dozen doors, and broke a dozen windows, but not a soul was to be seen. I then picked my way through a passage into an unpaved yard. Suddenly the ground yielded under my feet, and I fell softly enough upon a dung-heap. I might have been satisfied with the softness of my bed, but my nose would by no means accustom itself to the smells which assailed it from the reeking mixture. I gathered myself together again, got into the street, and at last to the market-place. Here stood a piazza with columns—whether Ionic, Doric, or Bohemian, I cannot say, but I believe the last. ‘Ah!’ thought I, ‘you lucky dog, you will at least have a roof over your head here;’ and so I laid myself down upon the bare stones. I was dead beat, and slept like a marmot. But this was not the worst bed I found in Bohemia. I still reflect with horror and back-ache upon a night that I spent in a child’s crib.”

“A child’s crib!” exclaimed a lady. “The Minister-President of Prussia in a child’s crib! How did you manage that, my dear Count?”

“Oh, that was simple enough. I doubled myself up like a pocket-knife.”

After dessert, when coffee and cigars were handed round, “Ah yes,” said Bismarck, as he proceeded to light an excellent Havana, “the value of a good cigar is best understood when it is the last you possess, and there is no chance of getting another. At

Königgrätz I had only one cigar left in my pocket, which I carefully guarded during the whole of the battle, as a miser does his treasure. I did not feel justified in using it. I painted in glowing colours, in my mind, the happy hour when I should enjoy it after victory. But I had miscalculated my chances."

"And how?"

"A poor dragoon. He lay helpless, with both arms crushed, moaning for something to refresh him. I felt in my pockets and found I had only gold, which would be of no use to him. But stay—I had still my treasured cigar! I lighted this for him and placed it between his teeth. You should have seen the poor fellow's grateful smile! I never enjoyed a cigar so much as that one which I did not smoke."

But there seems to be some little discrepancy between this cigar story and another one of the same kind which Bismarck told at a dinner he gave soon after the war, his guests including Moltke, Roon, the Bavarian military *attaché*, several distinguished Generals, Herr von Bennigsen, Herr von Forckenbeck, and other parliamentary celebrities. After dinner the Chancellor himself opened a box of cigars, and began to hand them round. His *vis-à-vis* was Moltke, and to him he said, with a smile, as he offered him a Havana :

"Do you remember, my dear General, the last time you accepted a cigar from me?"

"No, I cannot say I do," replied the great strategist.

"Well," rejoined Bismarck, as he lighted his cigar, "I myself shall never forget the occasion. It was on

the day of Königgrätz, during the anxious time when the battle stood still, and we could neither go forward nor backward—when one *aide-de-camp* after another galloped off without ever returning, and we could get no news of the Crown Prince's coming. I began to feel frightfully uneasy, and my eyes were wandering about in search of you. Looking round, I saw you standing not far off. You were gazing on the course of the battle with a look of the most serene indifference, and the stump of a cigar in your mouth. 'Well,' said I to myself, 'if Moltke can go on smoking so calmly as that, it can't be so very bad with us after all.' So, riding up, I offered you my case, which contained two cigars, a good and a bad one. With the unerring glance of the commander you selected the former. Gentlemen, I smoked the bad one myself in the evening after the battle, and I can assure you that I never had one in all my life that tasted so well."

On first entering the precincts of the Castle at Nicolsburg, belonging to Count von Mensdorff-Pouilly, where the peace preliminaries were afterwards signed, Bismarck remarked to his companion, Herr von Keudell (afterwards ambassador at Rome):

"My old mansion at Schönhausen is nothing in comparison with this splendid edifice, but I would much rather be here as the guest of Count Mensdorff than that he should be now with us."

It was here at Nicolsburg where Bismarck had such a hard struggle with the King to exact only such conditions of peace as contained not the seeds of a future war. He had the ungrateful task, as he said,

"of pouring water into the (King's) foaming wine." In subsequent conversation with the celebrated jurist, Professor Bluntschli, of Heidelberg, Bismarck remarked that, after the battle of Königgrätz, he alone was for peace. The King was out of humour, and the Generals were enraged against the civilian element. Bismarck told the King that he would rather resign than take upon himself the responsibility for a continuance of the war, and begged his Majesty, if he went on with the campaign, to give him a commission in the active army, in order to prove, at least, that he had no lack of personal courage. Prussia had already attained great results, and these should not be imperilled by aiming at such things as a triumphal march into Vienna, or the annexation of Austrian or Saxon territory.

It was in this sense also that Bismarck spoke with Count Seherr-Thoss, a nobleman who had, as early as 1862, in Paris, offered to place his services at the disposal of the Prussian Minister in the event of his desiring to enter into relations with Hungary and play the *rôle* of a German Cavour. Starting from Paris immediately after receiving the news of Königgrätz, Count Seherr-Thoss arrived at the Prussian headquarters (Pardubitz) on July 8th, and caused much amusement by relating how Paris had "burst out into flags and illuminations" on hearing that Francis Joseph had ceded Venetia to Napoleon.

"Looking like the god Jupiter," wrote the Count, "Bismarck appeared in the simple uniform of a major, and was respectfully saluted on all sides. I had

scarcely told him my errand when the Premier interrupted me, and ran to the King to prevent his receiving General von Gablenz, who had just come for the second time to demand an armistice. Returning, he offered me a cigar, and said :

“ ‘ And you also put me down as a Junker and a reactionary? Well, appearances are often deceptive. I was obliged to play that part to attain my ends. On all sides people tried to prejudice the King against me by representing me as a Democrat in disguise. I succeeded in obtaining his entire confidence by showing him that I did not flinch even before the resistance of the Chamber when the object was the re-organisation of the army, without which war was impossible and the security of the State in danger. In this struggle my nerves have suffered, and all my vital forces have been exhausted. But I have vanquished them all,’ he cried, in magnificent crescendo wrath, smiting the table violently with his hand, and mentioning the names of three persons who seemed to have caused him special annoyance.

“ ‘ Within the next ten minutes two despatches from Central Germany arrived, both announcing victories, and I took the liberty of asking him what would be the fate of Southern Germany.

“ ‘ ‘ What could we do with those Ultramontanes ? ’ he replied. ‘ We don’t want them, and, moreover, we must not swallow more than we can digest. We will not fall into the same mistake as Piedmont, which has rather weakened than strengthened itself by the annexation of Naples.’ ”

This may be supplemented by a conversation which

Bismarck had soon after the battle of Königgrätz with a wounded Austrian officer, to whom he said :

“Prussia has a great interest in seeing the power of the Hapsburg monarchy maintained. In the interest of Germanism, both Prussia and Austria have their separate missions to fulfil. It is the duty of Prussia to achieve German unity, while on the other hand Austria, as the ally of Prussia, will have to look after the interests of Germanism in the East, and, acting as the connecting link between this and Slavism, prevent their coming into collision.”

“Do you really mean it?” remarked the officer. “But people say of your Excellency that you will, sooner or later, try to incorporate Austria with Germany.”

“I know they say so,” rejoined Bismarck, “but no true statesman will believe it of me. I should be fit for a madhouse if I were to think of such a thing. With Austria’s expulsion from the Germanic Confederation we have only attained the first step towards our national aims, but it will be years before Prussia can succeed in bringing about even the outward form of German unity. Perhaps even half a century will be needed to establish this unity on foundations so firm that it cannot be destroyed. I shall be dead long before that, and my successors will have enough to do in strengthening the foundations of the national fabric. But do you think we should meanwhile be such utter fools as to annex Austria and thus encumber ourselves with fourteen million Slavs, a clerical Austro-German party, and a powerful Ultramontane aristocracy?”

On his return from Bohemia, King William had a very festive reception at Görlitz, which had been the "Red Prince's" point of departure for the campaign at the head of the First Army. Among other things his Majesty was greeted by a bevy of white-robed maidens, who tendered him a laurel wreath. His Premier, too, was offered one, but this he declined, saying: "No, no, *gnädiges Fräulein*, this is an honour I don't deserve. For I was not a combatant, you know, and had no share in our victories."

"But your Excellency *began* the war," replied the maiden, with a prompt and pretty wit; and then Bismarck, with a smile, accepted the proffered wreath.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *FEDERAL CHANCELLOR.*

NAPOLEON had calculated on the defeat of Prussia in her struggle with Austria. He had done all he could "to curb this cruel devil" [Prussia] "of his will," and when he saw that Bismarck insisted on garnering the fruits of victory in his own way, his Imperial Majesty suddenly changed his tone. If he had failed to curtail Prussia of her conquests, he could at least demand an equivalent compensation for France, so as thus to redress the balance of European power. Bismarck had only been back in Berlin two days with the draft of the Treaty of Prague in his pocket, when he was again waited upon by M. Benedetti, who, on behalf of his Imperial master, now demanded a settlement.

"It is well known," said the Chancellor afterwards, "that on the 6th of August, 1866, it came to this, that I was treated to a visit from the French Ambassador, who, in brief language, delivered the ultimatum: cede Mayence to France, or expect an immediate declaration of war. Of course I did not hesitate one second with my answer, and it was, 'Very well, then, let there be war!' With this reply he went back to Paris, where they thought over the



matter and gave me to understand, that his (Benedetti's) first instructions had been extorted from the Emperor during his illness."

The same incident was graphically narrated by M. Vilbort, correspondent of the *Siècle*, to whom Bismarck had unbosomed himself in a memorable interview *before* the war, and who now came to take leave of the Prussian Premier prior to his returning to Paris. "On the 7th of August," said M. Vilbort, "we took our leave of M. de Bismarck, from whom we had received, before, during, and after the war, a consistently kind reception, for which we are bound to express our liveliest acknowledgments. About 10 p.m. we were in the study of the Premier, when M. Benedetti, the French Ambassador, was announced. 'Will you take a cup of tea in the salon?' M. de Bismarck said to me. 'I will be with you in a moment.'

"Two hours passed away; midnight struck; one o'clock. Some twenty persons, his family and intimate friends, awaited their host. At last he appeared, with a cheerful face and a smile upon his lips. Tea was taken; there was smoking and beer, in German fashion. Conversation turned, pleasantly or seriously, on Germany, Italy, and France. Rumours of a war with France were again current in Berlin. At the moment of my departure I said: 'M. le Ministre, will you pardon me a very indiscreet question? Do I take war or peace with me back to Paris?'

"M. de Bismarck replied, with animation, 'Friendship, a lasting friendship with France! I entertain the firmest hope that France and Prussia, in the

future, will represent the dualism of intelligence and progress.'

"Nevertheless, it seemed to us that at these words we could detect a singular smile on the lips of a man who is destined to play a distinguished part in Prussian politics, the Privy Councillor Baron von Keudell.

"We called on him the next morning, and admitted to him how much reflection this smile had caused us.

" 'You leave for France to-night,' he replied ; 'well give me your word of honour to preserve the secret I am about to confide to you until you reach Paris. Ere a fortnight is past we shall have war on the Rhine if France insists upon her territorial demands. She asks of us what we neither will nor can give. Prussia will not cede an inch of German soil ; we cannot do so without raising the whole of Germany against us, and if it must be, we should much prefer to see it rise against France rather than against ourselves.' "

About this time Bismarck was much more accessible to Press interviewers than he afterwards became.

On the occasion of one of his visits to Paris, he called on M. Thiers, when the latter asked him what he had been doing all day.

"Oh," said Bismarck, "I refused myself to three diplomatists, one of whom was an ambassador ; but, on the other hand, I received five journalists, and from them I learned more than I should have done from the others, who are all more or less pupils of Machiavelli or Talleyrand."

Soon after his parting interview with M. Vilbort

of the *Siècle*, Bismarck gave a long audience to the editor of the *St. Petersburger Zeitung*, the champion of Germanism in the Russian capital, when the talk very naturally came to be of the Teutophobia then raging in Russia.

"I do not believe," said Bismarck, "that this hatred will ever extend to other circles; nor can it be otherwise, for the Russian will never be able to dispense with the German. The Russian is a very amiable fellow; he has intellect, fancy, pleasant manners, and social talents; but to work even eight hours a day, six times a week, with fifty of them in the year—that no Russian will ever be able to learn till doomsday. I cannot help thinking of what a Russian officer once said to me. We were talking about the fact that so many officers of German extraction in the Russian army rose to the rank of General. 'Why should a German not become a General?' remarked the officer. 'He neither drinks, nor steals, nor leads a dissolute life; he rides his own horse himself—he can't help rising to be General.' And I am convinced that those very Russians who are now loudest in the expression of their hatred of us would take no physic from the hands of a native apothecary if they could help it. In Russia they will never be able to do without German druggists, bakers, and sausage-makers. But even in much higher spheres, too, the peculiar qualities of the German will always bring him to the front. During the reign of the Emperor Nicholas, Prince Gortchakoff was long kept down and given unimportant, subordinate posts; his talents had not been recognised.

The Prince himself ascribed his suppression to German influence; and on finally coming to the helm, he set himself to removing as many as possible of the Germans employed within the sphere of his own ministry. And what is the result? At the present moment the most important embassies—those of London and Paris, Vienna, etc., are held by Germans, while the ablest penmen of his own ministry are also Teutons. Nay, Prince Gortchakoff himself would never have had the working power he possesses had his mother not been a German—as I myself once told him.”

The conversation then turned to the subject of the Baltic Provinces, on which Prussia, in the opinion of the Germanophobes at St. Petersburg, was for ever casting covetous eyes.

“What should we do,” said Bismarck, “with this long strip of territory between the sea and Poland without a Hinterland? Why should we exchange this for Russia’s everlasting enmity? No; in future, also, the Germans in the Baltic Provinces must act as guano for manuring the vast Russian steppe. Besides, I’m thinking that the inhabitants of these Provinces themselves wouldn’t thank us for making them Prussians. As for Poland, we have never coveted it, and will never do so. Hitherto our only aim has been to act with Russia in keeping Poland quiet. . . . Politics is the doctrine of the possible, the attainable. . . . But as to the Baltic Provinces, it would be the height of folly on the part of Russia to denationalise and Russify them, as thus she would deprive herself of the stock of honest functionaries

which she there procures. Is it not a well-known fact that a Russified German is much worse than a Russian himself? The Russian steals in order to relieve his immediate wants, but when the German steals, he thinks of the future, of provision for his wife and children, and robs with an *energie Teutonique*, as a clever Russian once remarked to me."

But to return to France and Benedetti, who wanted to steal Belgium, to speak of nothing else.

Bismarck had once kept Benedetti waiting in an ante-room while conversing with a Hessian deputy, Dr. Oetker, to whom he said, "Napoleon may do his utmost now that we know how strong we are."

And then, in reply to a question from the deputy as to the annexation of Hesse-Cassel, "The diplomatist that's waiting out there will be even less satisfied with my answer than you."

On Oetker asking why Prussia had not pursued her brilliant career of victory and settled the German question off-hand, Bismarck replied, with the sudden assumption of a very serious, almost gloomy, air: "Ah, you have never yet seen a battlefield. Certainly it was not fear of the French; we should have been on the Rhine sooner than they. But the cholera—the cholera—about this I received the most disquieting reports."

On another occasion, talking of Benedetti to a deputy from Wiesbaden, Dr. Carl Braun, Bismarck said, "I am scarcely sure of my life with this rabid Corsican." "But in saying this," added Dr. Braun, "he gave a smile, and we too broke out into a laugh when we thought of a northern oak of our

Chancellor's calibre being in danger from a little Italian cactus."

In this connection may be quoted an anecdote told by Lord A. Loftus. Bismarck at this time always wore a General's uniform, and in his own house there was a table in an ante-room on which his helmet was placed. One day, after dining with the Chancellor, Count Benedetti approached this table and took up the helmet to try it on his own head. On replacing it he remarked, "*Décidément il a la tête plus forte que moi*"—an observation of which subsequent events were soon to prove the truth.

One of Bismarck's most pressing tasks after the Bohemian campaign was the fitting of the conquered provinces—Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, and Hesse-Cassel—into the body politic of Prussia. Many came to Berlin from those provinces to implore a better fate, but the man of blood and iron was inexorable. To one deputation which came to him, with various complaints, he said, "Gentlemen, Prussia is like a good warm woollen jacket, very unpleasant at first, but one that will give you a great deal of comfort"; and to another that complained of the taxation and the military service, "Dear me, gentlemen, do you think that you can become Prussians for nothing?"

Bismarck was heartily sorry for the fate of Hanover and he was said to have spent more sleepless hours from thinking over the deposition of George V. than Cromwell did from fretting over Charles I.'s execution. He reconciled that deposition with the dictates of his reason, but not with those of his faith in the

inviolability of kings. When it had been decided to annex Hanover, the Crown lawyers were instructed to draw up a report of legal justifications for this measure ; but when Bismarck had read half through this document, he threw it aside with irritation : " Better nothing than that—it reminds me of Teste's Memorandum on the confiscation of the estates of the Orleans family."

With regard to Hesse-Cassel, Bismarck once made an interesting revelation. He had done all he could, he said, to convince the Elector of the folly of the course he seemed bent on pursuing ; and even on the very day (June 15th) before the outbreak of hostilities, he had tried to persuade the heir presumptive to the Electorate to proceed to Cassel and induce the government there to assume a neutral attitude. An extra train was offered him for this purpose ; but it was of no good. The Landgrave Frederick William placed his confidence in the 800,000 Austrians who had taken the field, and staked his chances on them. True, he left for Cassel the same day, but with the ordinary train, and placed himself at the disposal of the Elector.

It is a curious fact that Bismarck's policy at this time encountered almost as much opposition from the King as it did from the Chamber. For it had cost him, as he afterwards said, a " frightful struggle " to persuade the King to fight Austria ; he had experienced equal difficulty in making his Majesty forego his resolution to annex a portion of Austrian territory after the war—an act, he argued, which could only prove the cause of a future struggle ; and on the

question of an indemnity from the Chamber after the war it was again the King who most stoutly opposed this proposal, which aimed at effecting a formal reconciliation between Crown and crowd.

Apart, perhaps, from the army, there were very few subjects on which King William and his Premier were quite at one; and one of the questions that seriously divided them was that of the crown of Roumania, which Prince Charles of Hohenzollern had accepted, in 1866, on the urgent private advice of Bismarck. The King, on the other hand, had strongly dissuaded his kinsman from doing this—the more so as a Conference of the Powers sitting at Paris seemed to favour the proposal, supported by Austria and England, of appointing a native Hospodar to be Regent of Roumania for a provisional term of four years. In the event of this proposal being carried, Bismarck feared that this Hospodar would become the tool of Austria, and then it was that he sent for Prince Charles, who was serving as a lieutenant in the Prussian Guards, saying that he wished to speak to him, not as a politician, but as a private friend.

As such, Bismarck advised him to act boldly, and start at once for Bucharest. He needn't ask the King's express permission to do so, but simply beg for leave of absence to travel abroad, which his Majesty would be sure to give. Then he should go direct to Paris in the strictest *incognito*, as nothing could be done without Napoleon. For Russia and Turkey would protest against his election, and Prussia in that case could not support him. "But once you are in Bucharest," he continued, "the



question can be much easier settled. The Conference will then be confronted with an accomplished fact, and the protesting Powers will have to end by recognising a result which cannot be undone. But even should the scheme fail, you will then have for the rest of your life a pleasant recollection of a piquant adventure."

This, then, was the "pleasant recollection," the "*schöne Erinnerung*" which was so long falsely ascribed to Bismarck with reference to Prince Alexander of Battenberg and Bulgaria. Prince Charles, finding that Bismarck's advice accorded with his own inclinations, suddenly appeared upon the scene at Bucharest, and was soon thereafter acknowledged by the Porte and the other Powers as lawful Prince, afterwards King, of Roumania.

Thus had Bismarck's policy of boldness triumphed over his royal master's policy of caution. But in the case of the "indemnity" their rôles were just reversed.

"The question of the indemnity," said Bismarck to Professor Bluntschli, "proved a very difficult one for me. The rest of my ministerial colleagues would not hear of it, while the King himself looked upon it as imperilling his honour. He would never, he said, make an apology to the Chambers. It cost me the greatest efforts to make him understand that the word indemnity here meant no more than if the Chambers had known everything: they would have acted, *rebus sic stantibus*, just as we did."

It was this frequent reluctance of the King to act on the advice of his Premier which made the latter

once compare his Majesty to a hunter, who must be well spurred before taking a hedge. Another time he said that there was too much and too little of the Hohenzollern in him ; and again, "that he could not do what he liked, because he had to consult a king whom he had not himself created." But at a later time he said : "I can never forget that his Majesty, in following my advice, has twice imperilled his crown. He condescended to take my counsel before going to war with Austria, and, four years later, before going to war with France. He knew full well, when he did so, that all he valued in the world was at stake. But he trusted me implicitly. For that reason alone I would serve him to the best of my power, as long as my services might be required by him."

Germane to this subject was a conversation which Herr von Unruh had with Bismarck several years later, but which may now be recorded. Soon after resigning the Premiership of Prussia—which he did at the beginning of 1873, but resumed the office again before the end of the year—Bismarck gave a parliamentary dinner, and the talk came to be of his resignation, the Chancellor denying the rumour that he had had any difference with the Emperor-King. His double duties as Prussian Premier and German Chancellor had simply been too much for him.

Herr von Unruh said it was a pity that the King's touching letter to him on the subject had not been published sooner, the general opinion being that his Majesty had composed the thing himself, and that it had come straight from his heart.

Bismarck confirmed this, adding that the draft of

the letter had been submitted to him, and that he had only corrected two mistakes in spelling (for the orthography of his Majesty was sometimes as faulty as that of Blücher). He was sorry, however, that he had done this, as then there would have been less doubt as to the genuineness of the letter.

Herr von Unruh observed that there was one thing which he and many others gave the Emperor credit for, and which history also would acknowledge.

"And what was that?" asked Bismarck.

Herr von Unruh said he would out with what he meant if the Chancellor would not take it amiss.

"Certainly not," replied the Prince. "Say whatever you like."

"Well, I mean the circumstance that the King not only retains so inconvenient a Minister as no King of Prussia ever had before, but also follows his advice implicitly, in foreign affairs at least, and is grateful to him for it."

"There you are right," rejoined the Chancellor, who then went on to speak of the "indemnity" which he had successfully advocated after Königgrätz against the wish of the King, to whom he had once said: "If certain things are asked of me which I honestly look upon as detrimental to the Crown or the State, I can become your Majesty's soldier, but must cease to be your Minister."

Referring to the strong opposition of the King in the matter of the "indemnity," Herr von Unruh remarked that the Crown Prince had at least cordially supported the Premier in his wise and moderate policy.

"Yes," said Bismarck. "Passively at least—actively at Nicolsburg"—where the Chancellor had to restrain the King from making immoderate demands of Austria. And then he went on to relate how his Majesty had written on the margin of the Peace-Preliminaries :

"It was not my intention to approve these little honourable conditions, which do not correspond with the victories we have won ; but my son and successor, to whom they were submitted, having sided with my Premier, there is nothing for me but to sanction them."

Bismarck added that he had taken special care to preserve this document in the archives of the Foreign Office.

In the course of an interview which Herr von Unruh had with Bismarck after the war with Austria had broken out, the Premier dwelt upon the necessity for a speedy termination of the parliamentary "Conflict," saying that the King would be all the readier to terminate it in the event of his coming home from Bohemia victorious.

Herr von Unruh doubted not the Premier's present intentions in this respect, but did not feel so sure about what would happen if Austria were defeated. At any rate, he felt inclined to doubt whether Bismarck himself would be able to get his views in this respect carried out.

"Then in that case," replied Bismarck, "I would resign."

Questioned then as to whether he thought it altogether impossible for the Prussian army to be defeated,

and what would happen if nothing were done, Bismarck said : " Do you know what would then happen ? The King would abdicate."

Compare this with what Motley wrote, on visiting Bismarck a little later at Varzin : " He said he used, when younger, to think himself a clever fellow enough, but now he was convinced that nobody had any control over events—that nobody was really powerful or great—and it made him laugh when he heard himself complimented as wise, far-seeing, and exercising great influence over the world. A man in the situation in which he had been placed was obliged—while outsiders, for example, were speculating whether to-morrow it would be rain or sunshine—to decide promptly, ' it will rain,' or ' it will be fine,' and to act accordingly with all the forces at his command. If he guessed right, all the world said ! ' What sagacity ! —what prophetic power ! If wrong, all the old women would have beaten me with broomsticks.' "

This was evidently a reference to a remark which had been made to Bismarck by a Prussian General on the evening of Königgrätz, when the Premier's features relaxed into a smile as he at last beheld the Austrians in full flight. " Ah," said the General, " you may well smile now ; but if things had gone wrong with us, the market women of Berlin would have beaten you about the ears with their brooms."

But Bismarck had already decided never to expose himself to this certain abasement. Among those who had assembled to take leave of him before he started for Bohemia was the Belgian Minister, who wished him a cheery "*Au revoir !*" "*Au revoir !*" replied

the Premier, "if all goes well ; otherwise I shall get myself ridden down in the last cavalry charge."

That in such a charge he would have wielded his sabre to good account before being hurled from the saddle may be inferred, perhaps, from the fact that, when at Göttingen, he had emerged victorious from no fewer than about sixty sword duels, and that only once was he accidentally hit. Among the members of the first North German Reichstag there was one—Bode by name—who had fought several duels with Bismarck at Göttingen.

"Are you the man who did this?" asked the Chancellor, pointing to a scar on his left cheek ; and on receiving an affirmative answer, he added, with a smile : " But the cut was not according to the rules ; it was only a splinter from your blade that did it. But tell me, what has become of A. B.—?" another fellow-student who had been the means of creating very bad blood between the Brunswickers and the Hanoverians (of whose fighting Corps Bismarck had been a member).

" Oh !" said Bode, " he has remained the black-guard (*Schweinehund*) he always was."

" God knows," replied Bismarck, with a loud laugh, " that he certainly was."

Herr von Dietze-Barby was a very old boon-companion (*Zechbruder*) and country neighbour of Bismarck, and when the former was first returned to the Prussian Diet as well as the North German Parliament, in 1866, the Chancellor was more than delighted at this unexpected restoration to his side of his "ancient, trusty, drouthie crony," whom he invited

to dine with him on the very day of his arrival in Berlin. "But only in your frock coat, mind you, for I hate evening dress."

Bismarck would not hear of members of the Reichstag being paid for their legislative labours (like those of the Prussian Parliament), but he said to his friend von Dietze: "You don't get daily pay in the Reichstag" ("I have taken precious good care of that," he might have added), "but I will do all I can to make it up to you. I shall have a cover laid for you every day at dinner-time."

Bismarck had already given his North German countrymen universal suffrage, but he would on no account hear of paying them for their legislative services. The Prussian Constitution awards daily pay (fifteen marks), in addition to their travelling expenses to and from the seat of the Legislature, to members of Parliament during the session; but rather than allow such a principle to figure in the Constitution of the North German Confederation, the Chancellor threatened to wreck it altogether. At one of his parliamentary *soirées*, the talk came to be of this question, and he said: "Personally, I should do nothing but profit by the proposed payment of members, seeing that, as you know, my closest political adherents are rather a lazy lot. But once pay them, and they will turn up in much larger numbers, fearing, as they would, that the Opposition would always be in their seats."

Bismarck himself frankly admitted that he looked upon the non-payment of members as a sound corrective and counterpoise to the dangers of universal

suffrage, which had been freely granted to the German people, and with this safety anchor he vowed he would on no account part. In this respect, he said, the Assembly could not do better than be guided by the example of the English, who understood and applied the principle of liberty much better than other peoples. Once attach pay to the possession of a seat in Parliament, and this would soon become an arena for the activity of all sorts of dark "Catiline characters," as well as a mere academic dumping and debating ground for the waifs and strays of the cultured proletariat, from which Germany had already suffered so much.

Introduce payment, he said, and Parliament would very soon be swamped with a flood of mere "professors" and unpractical dreamers—men who made a profession of politics and lived, not in order to make laws, but made laws in order to live—a most dangerous thing for any State. "The non-payment of members would help to shorten the duration of the session, as men with limited means could not afford to indulge in the luxury of going on jaw-jawing for ever, and listening to the music of their own eloquence." There was nothing like an unpaid Parliament for making it dispose of its work rapidly and well; while, on the other hand, *Diäten* would tend to make men talk for talking's sake, and protract the session, so as to swell their own revenues.\*

\* The anti-payment-of-members clause in the Constitution of the North German Confederation (1867) was included in the draft Imperial Constitution of 1871; but in the course of the debates on this draft the Reichstag, by a majority of



It was for these reasons that Bismarck would give his old friend Dietze-Barby no *Diäten*, but offered to compensate him for the lack thereof by a daily dinner. If Dietze failed to turn up for two or three days in succession, Bismarck would send to his hotel, Unter den Linden, to inquire what had become of him. And when Dietze rose to take leave of his importunate host after dinner (about six or seven o'clock), "Well, good-bye," Bismarck would say; "I shall see you again about ten."

Dietze was in the habit of giving grand shooting parties in the winter-time—for what country in all the world is so rich in fur and feather as the Mark of Brandenburg, or Prussian Saxony?—and Bismarck failed not on these occasions to honour the invitation of his old fellow-sportsman. At table one night, after an immense slaughter of hares, the talk came to be of the "Conflict" between Crown and Chamber, which had finally been put an end to by Königgratz, and Bismarck remarked:

"I know all the Sovereigns of Europe, and have the very greatest esteem for many of them. But, gentlemen, I ask you to believe that I am not in-

186 to 128, passed a resolution in favour of payment. This resolution, however, was promptly negatived by the Federal Council. Repeated attempts were subsequently made to induce the Imperial Government to part with its non-payment principle, but in vain. In 1874, however, this principle was, by mutual consent, modified to this slight extent, that a law was passed for placing free railway passes at the disposal of members of the Reichstag, enabling them to travel anywhere within the whole Empire during the session, as well as eight days before its commencement, and after its close.

dulging in a mere hackneyed phrase of loyalty when I assure you that I respect none of them so much as I do his Majesty King William. But even this King William of ours I should not like to see become an absolute monarch, since I look upon absolutism as the most unfortunate of all forms of government. You have no idea to what extent the destinies of a despotically ruled land can sometimes be influenced by a clever flunkey."

And yet upon another occasion a little later, Bismarck, in conversation with the celebrated jurist, Professor Bluntschli, spoke in a somewhat different strain. "In connection," he said, "with the proposal, after the war, that we should demand of the Chamber an indemnity for all our irregular acts previously committed, there also arose the question as to whether absolutism should not rather be re-introduced into Prussia. Personally I am not a devotee of any constitutional system in particular. A State can also be ruled with success in the absolute way."

*Bluntschli*: "In certain circumstances, certainly; but no longer surely in the case of a civilised people of the present time. Absolutism is only possible when exercised by great and imposing personalities, superior to all others; but the nations have no guarantee of this."

*Bismarck*: "Quite true, nor for the fact that these personalities are good ones. And then, the absolute ruler must be guided by very many considerations with which the constitutional sovereign does not need to trouble himself. The latter can shift his responsi-

bility on to the shoulders of majorities, but not the former. At the time I am speaking of I said to those who were considering the question with me, 'Prussia can be ruled in the absolute way, and it is under an absolutist *régime* that she grew great. But it won't do to rule in this way at one time, and in that way at another. The State cannot prosper if it is made to oscillate between two different kinds of government. Have you got the approval of the Crown Prince for the restoration of an absolutist *régime*? If not, we should not forsake the ways of the constitution and recur to absolutism, seeing that this latter would only last till the Crown Prince came to the throne.' This argument decided the matter, as it was known that the Crown Prince would never give his sanction to the proposed change."\*

Recurring to the subject of his royal master, Bismarck said to Bluntschli: "Like all the Hohenzollerns, the King has a lively sense of duty towards the State. He labours the livelong day, and has everything reported to him. More than once, in connection with important affairs, I have had to wake him up in the middle of the night, and submit to him in bed papers for his approval and signature. Nothing gratifies him more than the inspection of a regiment; and yet, if he were on the point of riding off to review

\* Writing to his wife from Vienna in 1864, Motley had said of Bismarck: "He is as sincere and resolute a monarchist and absolutist as I am a republican. But that does not interfere with our friendship, as I believe that Prussia is about as likely to become a republic as the United States to turn into a military monarchy."

a new battalion of the Guards, and I sent word that I had a report to make, he would certainly be very cross at this interference with his purpose, but he would remain all the same and hear what I had to say. He was brought up as a soldier, without any idea of his ever coming to the throne. But after his accession he at once set to work and did his best to make up for omitted opportunities. He became a diligent reader of documents—in the right way, too, beginning at the end. At first it was rather stiff work ; but the sexagenarian monarch made much more rapid progress in his mastery of affairs than one would have expected. His only amusement is an evening visit to the theatre.\*

“ At the same time the King feels that his orders will be absolutely obeyed by the army. Were he to say to me, ‘ Send all these gentlemen of the House of Deputies to Spandau,’ I do not say that, as a constitutional minister, I would do so ” (with a smile) ; “ but what I do say is that the King is firmly convinced, and not without reason, that the army would carry out his command to the letter.”

A very different King this, thought Bismarck, from

\* At a later time Bismarck said of the King : “ When the time of his Regency was approaching, he asked me for written information about all sorts of things. I gave my opinion in such detail as if I had been training a son in political science, so that privately the then Prince William probably mocked at the elementary character of my communications. But he was nevertheless grateful to me, as he always found something new in what I said. As Regent he wished always to be simply as an officer on duty, seeking most conscientiously to do it.”

his father Frederick William III., the "hero" of the Holy Alliance. Talking one day at table after the Bohemian campaign with his old editorial friend of the *Kreuz-Zeitung*, Herr Wagener, Bismarck said: "I cannot understand all this present enthusiasm for a renewal of the Holy Alliance (between Russia, Austria, and Prussia), as it has lately become clear enough that this Alliance was nothing but a Russian mouse-trap, and its epithet 'Holy' a mere joke. You will live to see, as I trust I too shall, that the war with Austria was nothing in my policy but a storm for clearing the air and preparing the way for an enduring alliance between us and that Power on a footing of perfect equality. You will all come to apologise to me yet, and laud me as the real executor of the will of Frederick William III."

"It is not very pleasant," Bismarck remarked to Wagener on another occasion, "to have an opera-glass levelled at you at fourteen paces, or a revolver at four; and any little gratification of vanity that one feels at being stared at so much does not last very long. All the little vanities of life have only a charm as long as we do not possess them. But once we attain them, we only think of what King Solomon said about the vanity of all things. Therefore it is that I cannot comprehend how any one can endure life who doesn't believe in another and a better one."

Talking on another occasion with Wagener about public opinion, the Chancellor said: "You doubtless remember the saying of the first Napoleon that three shrieking women will make more noise than a thousand

silent men. It is therefore very absurd of us to attach so much importance to the shrieking women of public opinion. True public opinion is that which is the outcome of certain political, religious, and social convictions, of a very simple kind, deep down in the national life ; and to recognise and give effect to this is the task of the true statesman. I might call it the undercurrent of public opinion. Hence it is that I have never reckoned with our parliamentary screamers, and that consequently I have always had the satisfaction of having enlisted on my side the public opinion by which I set any store. The National Assembly in St. Paul's, Frankfort, and the Union Parliament at Erfurt, were both in point of fact composed of excellent speakers ; and yet, what remains of them now ? ' Swallowed up and forgotten : such is the singer's curse.' ” \*

On another occasion he remarked to Wagener : “ It is just the same with these oratorical gentlemen ” (Lasker, etc.), “ as with many ladies who have small feet. Not content with this they wear shoes that pinch them, and are for ever pushing out their feet in order that they may be seen and admired. In the same way, when any one has the misfortune to be eloquent, his tendency is to speak too often and too long.”

Some years afterwards Bismarck said of public speaking : “ The strongest wrestler, even in the field of oratory, worsts the others. But the orator is not always the best judge of politics. To be a good speaker, you must have the gift of improvisation. We have all often witnessed public entertainments—

\* From Uhland's beautiful ballad, *Des Sängers Fluch*.

music, varied with extempore declamation—at which a subject with which the *improvisatore* was totally unacquainted was given to him, and he delivered such a brilliant oration upon it as, but for my *entourage*, would almost have succeeded in convincing me for the moment. All I mean to say is that we cannot—with open eyes, at least—confide the guidance of public affairs to masters of mere eloquence any more than to professional improvisers; still less can we trust to them as party leaders or Ministers. I only mention this in order to point out that eloquence is a gift which is nowadays over-estimated, and exercises greater influence than is its due.

“A good speaker must be somewhat of a poet, and therefore cannot adhere mathematically to the truth. He must be *piquant* and exciting—easily inflamed, that he may be inflammatory—wherefore, to my mind, a good speaker can but seldom be a safe statesman. Sensibility, not sense, must predominate in his nature; and I believe it incompatible with the physical constitution of humanity that any man should be at once a good speaker and a cool judge. Eloquence frequently, and to a perilous extent, outweighs discretion; but a man of cool reflection and sure, exact calculation, to whom the management of important business may be confidently entrusted, can scarcely be an accomplished orator. Whether there be any remedy against the evils of eloquence in our present state of high civilisation, I know not; but it is half the battle to recognise those evils for what they are. Let me warn you, therefore, against wasting so much time as heretofore upon exhibitions

of eloquence in our parliamentary work, which gives us enough to do as it is. I repeat that speeches are useful as conveying information; but they must not be allowed to govern. The elector has a right to be represented by a person who is independent of eloquence, neither stimulated nor terrorised by it."

With respect to the introduction of direct and universal suffrage, Bismarck remarked to Wagener, "If you wish to transform an ancient mould, you must first liquefy it."

On another occasion he described universal suffrage as "the government of a house by its nursery"; but he added, "You can do anything with children if you only play with them." Some one observed, "You can make a mob cry anything by paying a few men among them a groschen apiece to start the shouting." "*Nein*, but you need not waste your groschen," demurred the Premier: "*es gibt immer Esel genug die schreien unbezahlt*" (There are always asses enough to bray gratis).

Bismarck himself was ever an adept at the art of "starting the shouting," and of manipulating that public opinion which he sometimes affected to despise. Never was his dexterity in this respect more conspicuously displayed than when Napoleon betrayed a desire to acquire German Luxemburg from its Sovereign, the King of Holland. By prompting Herr von Bennigsen, Chief of the National Liberals, to put a parliamentary question to the Government on the subject, and replying to it in a most subtly alarmist tone, the Chancellor managed to arouse such a storm of indignant protest throughout the whole nation as



thoroughly frightened the rapacious land-grabber of the Tuileries, and convinced him that he would have to fight the whole of Germany if he was to fight at all. In connection with this Luxemburg question—which thus threatened to precipitate the inevitable war between France and Germany in the spring of 1867—Count Bethusy had a conversation with General Moltke, who expressed himself strongly in favour of war.

“After a war such as we have just had,” said Moltke, “we cannot wish for another, and no one is farther from doing so than myself. Nevertheless, I am very strongly of opinion that the present opportunity for a war with France should be seized, for within the next five years I hold such a struggle to be quite inevitable, and during this period our present indisputable superiority over the French in armament and organisation will gradually be reduced to our disadvantage. So the sooner we get to handgrips with them the better. The present opportunity is a good and natural one, therefore it should be used.”

Count Bethusy repeated these arguments of so eminent an authority on war to Bismarck, who admitted the justice of Moltke's contention, as well from the political as the military point of view, but at the same time declared that he never could assume the responsibility of inflicting the miseries of such a war upon the nation unless this war were really necessary, as it had been in the case of Austria, to safeguard the nation's vital interests or honour. The personal conviction of a ruler or statesman that war

was inevitable did not seem to him to justify its precipitation. Unforeseen events might alter the situation and avert what appeared to be unavoidable.

On being told next day what Bismarck had said, Moltke remarked, "Bismarck's logic is unassailable, but it will one day cost us many lives"—which it certainly did.

A few months later, after the Luxemburg question had been settled by the neutralisation of the Grand Duchy, Bismarck gave a dinner-party, his guests including his old teacher, Dr. Bonnell, and the staff of the Gymnasium, which was now in turn being attended by the Chancellor's two sons. The conversation turned on Luxemburg, and some one contended, with Moltke, that this question should have been made the pretext for a war with France.

"My dear professor," said Bismarck, "such a war would have cost us the lives of at least thirty thousand brave soldiers, and in the best of cases brought us no profit. But he who has once gazed into the glazed eye of a dying warrior on the field of battle will think twice before beginning a war."

Compare this with his reply to the Socialist Herr Bebel, who had bitterly complained that Luxemburg had been "lost to Germany." "In my opinion," said the Chancellor, "we ought to be grateful to his Majesty for having withstood the temptation to lead his armies to new victories, seeing that the cause of war would have been a mere right of garrison contested by our neighbours, and no longer maintainable by ourselves. A Sovereign in the habit of himself leading his army to the field, who has witnessed the fall

of so many of his warriors, and seen their eyes glazed in death, does not lightly resolve upon war."

At one of his parliamentary *soirées*, Bismarck remarked on the same subject :

"I thought for one long and troubled week—which only lasted, however, from Tuesday to Friday—on the question of war with France. It was not the eventuality of defeat which concerned us, for Moltke had positively assured us that we would win. No; it was the question whether we should begin a war with France on the assumption of certain, or at least highly probable, victory. This question we at last negatived, deciding only to go to war if forced to do so. We took into consideration all the tremendous losses which such a war would entail, the misery and wretchedness of thousands of families. No, my friends, you need not look at me like that, as if you felt surprised at my having a heart. Believe me, I have one as well as you. War is always war—with its wasted lands, its lamentation of widows and orphans—all of which is so terrible that I for my part will only resort to it in the most extreme case of necessity."

It is more than probable that the French themselves, then and there, would have made a *casus belli* out of Luxemburg, had their bellicose heat not been suddenly cooled by one of Bismarck's "cold-water douches" (*kalttes Wasserstrahl*), as he called them, in the shape of the sudden and surprising revelation that, immediately after the campaign of 1866, the South German States had concluded treaties of defence and offence with the Northern Confederation.

Napoleon had not been aware of this ; and on the publication of these treaties during the Luxemburg crisis, he joined Count Beust in denouncing them as "masterpieces of treachery," "the *ne plus ultra* of Machiavelism."

Of the genesis of these treaties Bismarck himself gave a most interesting account. One day (spring of 1867) when war on account of Luxemburg seemed to be inevitable, the Chancellor, leaving the ministerial bench, sat down beside a deputy friend in the Reichstag, and after whispering with him for some time, he turned round to Herr von Unruh, who was sitting behind, and said, "To-morrow you will find some very important reading in the *Gazette*."

On Herr von Unruh asking whether he might not be favoured beforehand with some indication of the nature of the news, Bismarck readily replied :

"Oh, certainly: we have concluded treaties of offensive and defensive alliance with the Southern States—Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Herr von Unruh, with a look of the utmost delight; and then Bismarck went on to relate how, after the peace-preliminaries of Nicolsburg—which did not include the South German States—the Bavarian Premier, Herr von der Pfordten, had come to Berlin to treat for peace also. At first Bismarck had made some very serious demands, including a heavy war-contribution, and considerable cessions of territory—mentioning Ansbach-Bayreuth, which had once appertained to Prussia. Having thus rendered von der Pfordten very downcast and sufficiently "pliable," Bismarck said :

"But you can have peace very cheaply, without territorial cessions—apart, perhaps, from a slight rectification of frontier—and with a moderate money indemnity."

The Bavarian Premier, in joyful surprise, asked Bismarck what he meant.

"Nothing else but the immediate conclusion of an offensive and defensive treaty!"

Hereupon von der Pfordten burst into tears and embraced the Chancellor, though the latter used a much more forcible expression in describing the incident.

Soon after the settlement of the Luxemburg difficulty by an international Conference held in London, King William, accompanied by Bismarck, Moltke, and others, paid a visit to Paris—this being the year of the great Exhibition which Napoleon had devised in order to show that, above all things, he was a man of peace—an apostle, in fact, of the millennium. At first Bismarck had shown something like disinclination to the trip, but a word from the King made him change his mind.

"The King," he said to M. Benedetti, "thinks I am afraid, and that ever since my life was attempted I have been haunted by the fear of assassins."

In Paris, the Chancellor visited some of the theatres. Offenbach's *Grande Duchesse*, which, as a skit upon militarism, made so many laugh, excited in him only anger. He was especially indignant at the song, "The Sabre of my Sire." "You can't expect a pair of Jews (Offenbach and Ludovic Halévy) to feel any reverence for military traditions," he said; "but now

'*Le Sabre de mon Père*' will be associated with ludicrous ideas in the minds of Frenchmen, and old generals will be ashamed to give their swords to their sons on account of this odious jingle." On the other hand, Bismarck saw a performance of Sardou's *Nos bons Villageois* at the Gymnase, and he laughed loudly at the scene in which a colonel, who is mayor of his village, makes all the municipal councillors sign a document acknowledging that they are "a troop of donkeys"—"a genuflecting *troupeau*," as he himself had once called his diplomatic colleagues at Frankfort.

Some one observed to the Count at dinner, jokingly, "Did you not hear the people cry, '*Vive Bismarck!*'?" "No," he said; "they cried, "*V'la Bismarck, V'la Bismarck*—*mais c'est égal!*"—it is all one. On returning home, he remarked that he had been treated with "benevolent curiosity."

At Paris, Napoleon affected to have forgiven Bismarck for his "masterpiece of treachery" in connection with the military treaties, but he still followed with a jealous eye the progress of the national idea in Germany. The Emperor continued to remain in mortal apprehension about the "bridging of the Main," the boundary between North and South, which would at last bring about the longed-for "*Das ganze Deutschland*" of the poet Arndt. What Bismarck desired above all things was the banding of the South into a Confederation like that of the North, and with a Parliament at Munich similar to that at Berlin, "seeing," as he said, "that the two Assemblies would then be as sure to unite as the waters of the Red Sea after the passage of the Israelites."

Talking with a Munich journalist, Julius Fröbel, about this time, Bismarck said that the will of the Southern States must not be forced in any way, even if the unification of the whole Fatherland should take thirty years, as otherwise the seeds would be sown of an incurable hostility between North and South. . . . "And as for Austria, I will act towards her, as long as possible, as I would to my own wife if I were to quarrel with her—that is to say, with Christian patience. But between a velvet hand and cold steel I know no medium."

Pending the creation of a *Voll-Parlament* for all Germany, it was some progress in the desired direction that a *Zoll-Parlament* for the whole Fatherland at last met in Berlin (spring of 1868); and if this was not yet a bridge over the Main, it was at least the central pillar of the structure. The meeting of the *Zoll-Parlament*, marking as it did another decided advance in the direction of national unity, occasioned another violent outburst of French jealousy, and caused Bismarck to concentrate his thoughts on the character and intentions of that restless and resentful people. One of the chief members of the Customs Parliament (for Baden) was Professor Bluntschli, of Heidelberg, who one evening spent an hour and a half with Bismarck over beer and cigars.

"It may sound fantastical to you, Herr Professor," said the Chancellor, "if I assert that nations, like individuals, are either male or female. The Germanians are so very masculine that by themselves they are simply incapable of being ruled. Each of them tries to live in his own peculiar way. But bind them all

together, and then they are like an irresistible torrent that levels all before it. On the other hand, the Slavs and the Celts are feminine—non-productive. The Russians can do nothing without the Germans. They cannot work, but are easily led. They have no power of resistance, and simply follow their masters.

“The Celts, too, are nothing but a passive mass. It was only after the Germans went amongst them that the blend produced a political people. It was the same with the English ; also with the Spaniards as long as they were under the Goths, and the French when dominated by the Frankish element. But the French Revolution expelled this element, and thus restored the predominance of the Celtic nature. That inclines the French to submit to authority.

“The Westphalians and the Swabians are pure Germans with little alien admixture, and that is why it is so hard to accustom them to the idea of the State. But let them once be seized with a national idea, become infuriated with it, so to speak, and they will burst you rocks asunder. That, however, occurs but rarely. As a rule every village and every peasant-farmer wants to be left to himself. The Prussians are a strong blend of Slavonic and Germanic elements, and that is the chief cause of their political adaptability, combining as they do the pliancy of the Slav with the strength and virility of the German.

“And then another thing. The rule established by the Hohenzollerns was from the very first a reality, to which they brought the refractory nobility under subjection. My own family belongs to the *noblesse*



that dwelt on the left bank of the Elbe, and sided with the Sovereign in his efforts to subjugate the nobility on the right bank. But everywhere else in Germany the nobility has maintained an independence incompatible with the existence of any State. It is only in Prussia that the nobles have learned how to adapt themselves to and serve the State.

"True, our Sovereigns have been of the absolute kind, but their absolutism aimed at benefiting the State, not themselves. From time to time they have even hanged members of the nobility, so as to show that no one in Prussia may escape the law. It is in this way that Prussia has grown great. How small was it even under Frederick the Great, who said that the Sovereign must be the first servant of the State! This doctrine the Hohenzollerns have never forgotten. They have all been brought up in this spirit, which has become part of their very being.

"Dread of France would never for a moment keep me from a further advance in the field of German unity. I am not afraid of France. We are far superior to the French—a year ago more perhaps than now, but now as well. In saying this I do not wish to brag—far from it. But we have thought long and clearly over the whole thing. All our Generals are of the same opinion. True, the French, by a sudden rush, might get to Mayence or Coblenz. But then it would be all over with them, for they would meet with a resistance which they could not break. They haven't more than three hundred thousand men for the purposes of attack, and at every decisive point we could meet them with a

larger force. In the last war we had six hundred and forty thousand under arms, and more in reserve.

"It is possible that the French might surprise us by a sudden incursion in the South, but I do not believe that they will do so, as for this they would need fifty thousand men, who would then be wanting at the point where a decisive battle would have to be fought. In any case my advice to you is: let the French take what they can get, but give them nothing. Treat not with them, neither make them any concessions. In the worst of cases some persons and places will be ruined, but in the long run the whole nation will be the gainers, and you will be richly compensated for any losses.

"I do not set a higher value on the individual Frenchman than on the German, but we have the advantage of numbers. Therefore, supposing that God will not withhold from us His favour and grant it to the French, we shall repel their attack and then march on Paris. Napoleon knows how strong we are, and so we shall have peace: such is my firm belief. The united German people is the greatest military Power in the world, and has nothing to fear.

"Under all circumstances Austria will remain neutral. Apart from the state of her finances, she cannot afford to wage war. All her interests are against it. The German Austrians well know that a war, resulting favourably for Austria, would again imperil what they have won. Again, the Hungarians are equally aware that a victorious Austrian army would deprive them of their Constitution. As for the Austrian Slavs, they are open to Russian influence.

But if need be we can, by means of Russia, hold Austria completely in check. The Austrians will not dare to draw the sword. True, one or two Archdukes might be for such a course ; but what interest would Austria have in thus staking her existence? She would even lose in the event of the French beating us, seeing that she would then be powerless in face of the French conquerors, and have to dance as the latter piped.

"As for the Russians, we do not require to give them anything for their alliance in a war with France. Their weak side is Poland, which one French battalion would be sufficient to insurrectionise. The Russians cannot use the French as allies without thereby imperilling their dearest interests. The Poles are forced to look to and attach themselves to us in the same way as the Hungarians.

"With England our relations are excellent. Formerly the English leaned towards Austria as being the leading German Power, and as furnishing her with a certain support against France. But since the war of 1866 they have played quite another card, like the practical people they are, and now entertain no objection to the unification of Germany in our sense.

"The late reception of the Crown Prince in Italy surprised no one but the Prince himself. The King sent him there because we knew that he would be enthusiastically received, and because we wished to thwart the formation of a La Marmora cabinet. The plan succeeded, and a ministry hostile to us is now impossible. You see, therefore, that we are sure of

our national cause, at the development of which we now mean to work in peace."

The first impression which Bismarck had made on Bluntschli, as the latter wrote when recording this interview, was that of "a heroic figure of the time of the Nibelungen—gigantic, mighty, with bushy eyebrows and penetrating eyes. . . . But however Titanic and almost antediluvian he had appeared to me at first sight, he produced a totally different impression in the course of our conversation. He was exceedingly amiable and amazingly outspoken, yet charmingly easy in manner. Sometimes he laughed with his whole heart, while his voice revealed tender and even soft emotions. But once or twice his eyes flashed like lightning."

Another distinguished member of the Customs Parliament was Prof. Dr. Sepp, of the University of Munich, who one day entered into conversation with Bismarck as to the future relations between Bavaria and North Germany.

*Sepp* : "I can see many steps that lead into, but none out of, the lion's den."

*Bismarck* : "We offer ourselves at par ; but if you wish to have us above par, that is your affair."

*Sepp* : "We Bavarians are kinsmen of the Austrians, the latter being East Bavarians, we Westerns. You may knock us on the head, but you cannot turn us into Prussians."

*Bismarck* : "We don't want to, but only to see you, as good Germans, joining hands with us."

*Sepp* : "We fancied that Austria was stronger than she has proved to be, but even after Königgrätz we

should not like to be forced to take the field against her, as we had to do under the first Napoleon."

*Bismarck* : "Herr Professor, I have not taken a single inch of soil from the Austrians."

*Sepp* : "But if it is a case of going against the Czechs and the Magyars, we are prepared to help you in letting them feel the superior weight of the German sword."

*Bismarck* : "There you talk like a professor of history, and as a statesman I can make no reply."

*Sepp* : "Beg pardon ! But at the same time I can only be guided by the lessons of history. Your Excellency is a man of political action."

*Bismarck* : "*Ja wohl*, a man of action ; and much might be done if I had not so many personal obstacles to encounter"—(saying which the Chancellor made a vigorous motion with his foot, as if he were spurning away a snake).

*Sepp* : "Your power of work fills us all with wonder and admiration."

*Bismarck* : "Yes. Formerly I worked sixteen hours a day, but now I can only manage my ten or twelve. In the army I have worked my way up honestly to the rank of major, but the loss of time in changing my civilian attire every time I am called to the King amounted to an hour a day, until his Majesty was graciously pleased to allow me to go to him in any kind of dress. Thirty hours' unnecessary loss of time per month—just see what that makes in a whole year !" \*

\* Bismarck only got into the habit of constantly wearing his uniform on his promotion to the rank of General after the war with Austria. Before that he only once took with him his

On another occasion—a grand banquet that was given in the Berlin Exchange to the members of the Customs Parliament (May 1868)—Professor Sepp could not help complimenting Bismarck on his fresh and youthful appearance.

*Bismarck*: "Well, I do belong to the younger category of those about us here. But look at General Steinmetz there—he is now seventy, and is looking forward to another present from his young wife. Parliamentary life, it is true, soon ages a man—and then, if to that you add official service! . . . It is incredible the amount of matter I have to read through every day; and if I say anything, my words are at once weighted with a significance which would not be attached to them if they fell from the lips of another. I fancy that I am pushing, and am only pushed."

*Sepp*: "We stick to acts. With mere words no one can make history."

uniform, as a Major in the Landwehr, when he accompanied the King to a review. As Premier he used to wear a dressing-gown till noon, and received the Counsellors in that garb. He exchanged it for other garments only if an Envoy or a Minister was announced. His dress on such occasions was not always *à quatre épingles*. At Varzin he wore a common-looking shooting costume. His plain clothes were made at Frankfort. At his Silver Wedding a dress coat, by no means up to date, was found with great difficulty in the corner of a press, and Bismarck was glad to doff this uncongenial garment immediately after Divine Service. At Varzin, too, he always worked in his dressing-gown in the morning. It had a rope with tassels, with which Bismarck used to play when he walked up and down or stood in the room, trying to find some expression that he desired to use. As long as he wore plain clothes, he always went to the King in the so-called "small uniform."

*Bismarck*: "For all that is now happening we have to account to history."

*Von Steinmetz*: "How do you like Berlin?"

*Sepp*: "I can see nothing but uniforms and barracks, nor is there any talk but of war. But if it comes to this, should we Bavarians not best serve Prussia by observing an armed neutrality and covering your left flank so as to compel the French to take the bull by the horns on the Rhine?"

*Steinmetz*: "What? What? You think of remaining neutral in South Germany?"

*Sepp*: "No, I don't say that, but in one single day the French from Strassburg could be with us in Freiburg, and a little later in Munich. North Germany cannot come to our assistance so quickly."

*Steinmetz*: "How many men do you think you could bring into the field?"

*Sepp*: "An army of eighty thousand men—sufficient only to occupy Ingolstadt and defend Ulm."

*Steinmetz*: "With such a force I think I should be ready to take the offensive in the field, without letting it lie fallow in fortresses."

*Sepp*: "We quite understand that Prussia would be able to survive a disastrous battle, but for France such a thing would mean the fall of her dynasty."

*Steinmetz*: "What? Disastrous battle, said you? You shall see that we will make a very pretty thing of it."

*Moltke*: "Herr Professor, before the French can get to Munich, we shall be at Paris!"

Professor Sepp returned to Munich in a totally

different frame of mind from that in which he had come to Berlin. Coming to scoff, he had remained to pray, and to declare at the farewell banquet of the Customs Parliament, "We have seen that, as every time has its man, so the second half of this century has its man for Germany; and whatever may be the opinion of others, I for my part, behold this man in Count Bismarck."

In 1871, after the foundation of the Empire, Bismarck wrote to Dr. Sepp regretting that so good and enlightened a South German patriot as he had not been returned to the Reichstag; and three years later the Chancellor despatched the professor on an expedition to Phœnicia to see whether he could recover and bring back to Germany the bones of Kaiser Barbarossa who, on one of his crusades, had been drowned while crossing the river Saleph in Cilicia, and his body entombed in the cathedral of Tyre which collapsed twelve years afterwards. After excavating for some time, like another Dr. Schliemann, the learned professor concluded that he had found the coffin of Kaiser Red Beard; but alas! it now contained neither bones nor relics, and all he could do was to return home and write an erudite treatise on the subject, dedicated to his equally patriotic patron, the Imperial Chancellor.\*

\* Dr. Sepp's negative discovery was perhaps calculated to strengthen the popular belief in the legend which represents Barbarossa as sitting asleep before a stone table in a cave of the Kyffhäuser Mountain (in the Harz), and dreaming of the way in which he shall re-conquer and re-constitute Germany. A shepherd having once been introduced by a dwarf into the



It was at the Customs Parliament banquet, at which Professor Sepp had eulogised his Prussian patron as the man of all others for Germany, that Prince Hohenlohe, another Bavarian (afterwards to become the third German Chancellor), proposed, amid tremendous cheering, "The Unity of Germany."

"The short time we have been together," said Bismarck, in replying, "has vanished like a spring day; may it bear fruit like the blossoms of spring!"

Apart from his free-and-easy table-talk, Bismarck's formal after-dinner oratory was always of the most felicitous kind. Thus, at a banquet given by the historian Bancroft, American Minister in Berlin, in honour of General Grant's assumption of presidential power, Bismarck, in proposing the "victorious

cave, Barbarossa rose and asked his visitor "whether the ravens were still flying round the mountain?" and, on receiving an affirmative answer, sank down again with a sigh and a cry that he would still have to sleep another hundred years. This was the legend to which Bismarck himself had once made allusion in the Erfurt Parliament of 1850, which vainly essayed to bring about national union. Herr Simson, on assuming office as President, had reminded the Assembly that exactly one thousand years ago a Reichstag had met in Erfurt; and Bismarck (who was no less deeply versed in ancient German history than this famous jurist) profited by the allusion to show from old Spangenberg, the chronicler, that "King Ludwig had held it in order to put an end to the extortionate practices of attorneys and pettifoggers who at that time were an intolerable nuisance in Germany." And should its successor (he added, with bitter mockery) achieve a similar result, then "he would believe that the ravens of the Kyffhäuser had vanished, and that the day of German unity was near." Little, perhaps, did Bismarck then dream that he himself was to prove the "*Barbarossa Redivivus*" of the Fatherland.

General's," health, pointed out that the event had a special claim on the sympathy of the German people, seeing that it was Frederick the Great who had been the first neutral Sovereign in Europe to recognise the independence of the North-American Republic. Nor had the friendly relations between the two countries thus established by Washington and Frederick (whose flag-bedecked busts the Chancellor saw before him) ever suffered the least interruption, as he could testify, no less from his own experience than from the papers in the Prussian Archives. "Not only has no difficulty ever arisen between the two nations, but nothing has ever happened of a kind to cause even explanations to be offered on either side."

Nevertheless, Bismarck had once been very sorely tempted to imperil the good relations which ever existed between Washington and Berlin. Talking with an American journalist (*New-Yorker Zeitung*) in November 1866, after the war with Austria, Bismarck said that the Conservative party in Prussia had implored the King to recognise the Southern States, but as it was clear to him (the Chancellor) that only the North could be Prussia's true ally, he had inflexibly opposed the proposal, the consequence being that his Government never wavered in its friendship for President Lincoln.

"At the outset of our own late war," continued the Chancellor, "Austria was superior to us by sea, and we were not quite sure of Italy; so it was proposed that I should accept the services of some of your most distinguished naval officers in the South with five thousand men and the requisite vessels. They were

not to come over to us as the Confederate Fleet, but as private individuals. Thereupon I applied to your Minister here in Berlin to know whether the acceptance of this offer might not be obnoxious to the American Government. Mr. Wright had his doubts, and wrote to Washington. He was instructed to oppose the idea, and so I declined to have anything more to do with it. The proposal came from Captain Semmes."

Mr. Wright had been succeeded at the Berlin Legation by Mr. Bancroft; and of the latter Bismarck said, or rather wrote, to Motley, some little time after the Grant banquet, "Bancroft is one of the most popular personages in Berlin, and if you have still the old good-will for the town that you had when you looked out at the windows of Logier's house, do what you can to enable us to keep him . . . If you can, do prevent him from being sacrificed; he is better than most of the Europeans, who follow his, yours, and my trade; even if the smooth liars of the trade should talk about him exactly as my intimate enemies did about me, when they called me the diplomatist in wooden shoes."

We are to suppose that Bismarck always spoke German with Bancroft, for to Motley again he wrote, about the same time: "I am quite losing the habit of speaking English, as Loftus, in Berlin, is the solitary person who gives me an opportunity, and I never could write it without a dictionary, as I learnt it by the sound and by ear; so excuse the above, which I look upon as a school exercise for myself. I do not know if I am going to Berlin soon; hardly before the

1st. I should like to wait and see if the Landtag will not do me the favour of killing a few of my colleagues ; when I am there among them, the forbearance vouchsafed to me is extended to the rest. . . . In any event, as soon as I am in town, I hope to hear more about your leave, and hear certainly about the time of your visit. Then we will sit down again to a game of chess at Logier's house, and dispute as to whether Byron and Goethe can be compared to each other. I think we were then better men, in better times ; that is, younger. Remember me to your ladies."

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## CHAPTER VII.

### *THE FRENCH WAR.*

ON the afternoon of July 19th, 1870, M. Le Sourd, French *Chargé d'Affaires* in Berlin, handed to the German Chancellor a declaration of war. But on the 13th of the same month war had already been as good as declared. Years after, at one of his parliamentary *soirées*, Bismarck gave the following account of how this came about:—

“Great events always become encircled with a growth of legend, and that is often a good thing. There are some legends that should not be destroyed. The King was in Ems, I at Varzin, when the row arose about the candidature of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern for the crown of Spain. The French behaved as foolishly as possible—and more than all their Government, headed by Ollivier, who was not at all equal to the situation, and had no idea of the harm he was doing in the Corps Legislatif with his stupid boasting. At this time the situation was all in our favour. We as a matter of fact had been provoked, and as it had long been clear to us all that we should have to settle up with France, the present opportunity seemed a suitable one for doing so. Therefore I left Varzin and came to Berlin to

talk over all important matters with Moltke and Roon. On the way I received a telegram to the effect that Prince Charles Anthony of Hohenzollern had withdrawn the candidature of his son for the sake of peace, and that everything was now all right.

"With this unexpected settlement of the affair I was quite dumfounded, for I doubted whether an opportunity like the present would ever recur. On reaching Berlin I sent for Roland (a Foreign Office clerk), and told him to wire home that I should be back in three days. At the same time I telegraphed to His Majesty my resignation as Prussian Premier and Federal Chancellor. Thereupon the King telegraphed, asking me to come to Ems. But I had pondered long and clearly over the situation, and said to myself: 'If I go to Ems, everything will be spoilt. In the best of cases the matter will end in an unworthy compromise, and then the only possible, the only great and honourable solution of the problem will be out of the question. I must do all I can to bring his Majesty back to Berlin, where he will be able to feel the national pulse much better than in Ems.' In the most respectful manner, therefore, I tried to show his Majesty that it was quite impossible for me to leave Berlin.

"Fortunately the shortsighted and overweening French had meanwhile done all they could to throw the carriage off the track. For they asked the King to sign a letter which was tantamount to a deep humiliation. His Majesty wired to me for my advice, and I replied with a pure conscience, 'Signature impossible.'

"On the evening of the 14th I had asked Roon and Moltke to dine with me, and discuss all eventualities. We all shared the hope that the foolish action of France in making such an unheard-of demand of our King would, after all, obviate the danger of a feeble and inglorious issue of the affair. While we were still at table, a telegram came in from Ems" (detailing the last meeting between the King and Benedetti, the further importunity of the latter, and the final refusal of his Majesty to receive the Ambassador again on the subject).

"On my reading out this telegram, both Moltke and Roon dropped their forks and knives, and receded a little from the table. There was a long pause. We were all very much depressed, feeling that the matter was slipping through our fingers. At last I said to Moltke, 'Is our fighting instrument, is our army really in such an efficient state that we can enter into a war with the highest hope of success?' Moltke's belief in this respect was as firm as a rock. 'We have never,' he answered, 'had better war material than now'; and Roon—though I had not quite so much confidence perhaps in him—backed up Moltke's assurance to the full.

"'Well, then,' said I to both, 'you can now calmly go on with your dinner.'

"Thereupon I sat down at the round marble table, standing near the dining one, perused the King's despatch once more with great attention, took a pencil and erased the sentences referring to Benedetti's request for another audience, leaving only the head and tail. And now the telegram read somewhat differently.

"My two guests exclaimed, 'Splendid! That will do!' and now we continued our meal with the best of appetites.

"I gave directions for the telegram in its altered form to be communicated as quickly as possible to the semi-official News Agency (Wolff's Bureau), all the newspapers, and all our embassies abroad. We were still together when news came in about the effect which the telegram had produced in Paris. It had acted like a bomb. Whereas in reality the French had submitted an insulting demand to our lord and master, the effect of my telegram was such as to make them believe that their ambassador had been rudely treated by the King. The Boulevards now burst out into cries of '*A Berlin! À Berlin!*' . . . And a corresponding effect was also produced among us. The King, who at my urgent request had decided to interrupt his course of waters at Ems, returned to Berlin, and was quite stupefied by the outburst of popular enthusiasm which greeted him from every side. For he had no idea of what had meanwhile happened. . . . His eyes grew moist with tears; and gradually he came to see that it was in truth a national war which the people needed and craved for. . . .

"The further development of affairs is known to you all. But that was the point about which Gramont in his Memoirs expresses his sincere astonishment. He could not understand how, all at once, after the matter had appeared to take a pacific turn, the warlike mood again gained the ascendant. '*Une apparition sinistre survint. Tout d'un coup tout est*



*changé—Qu'était-il arrivé? Monsieur de Bismarck à Berlin.*' I am quoting from memory, but Gramont's words were something like that. Anyhow, I was the 'uncanny apparition.'

"But now let me only remark that I was quite within my rights in making the omission, I did from the King's telegram; for he had expressly left it to me to publish the whole or part of it, according to my discretion. I never had cause to regret the way in which it was edited."

On another occasion, when talking with the historian, Herr von Sybel, Bismarck gave a slightly different, yet substantially identical, account of the incident. After the Chancellor had read out the King's telegram in its modified form to his two friends, Roon said, "That's better." Moltke added, "At first it sounded like a *chamade*, and now it is a *fanfare*." Bismarck remarked, "If the telegram is delivered to the Ambassadors at eleven o'clock it can also be made known at Paris by midnight, and then the French will see how false is the assertion of their newspapers that the Prussians are suing for mercy. But suppose they take the thing amiss and draw the sword, how stands it then with our chances of victory?" "I believe," replied Moltke, "that we shall prove superior to them—always, of course, with the reservation that no one can ever foresee the issue of a great pitched battle." After going into details, he concluded: "If I could only lead our army in this war, then afterwards the devil would be quite welcome to this skeleton of mine" (slapping his breast as he spoke).

It will be seen from the above that, in the course of three years, Bismarck's views on war had undergone a radical change. For he had previously resisted the urgent advice of Moltke and others to seize the Luxemburg question as a pretext for war with France, on the ground that personal belief in the inevitability of war was not a sufficient reason for precipitating it.\* Circumstances, he thought, might after all arise to obviate an appeal to arms; but a few years more of the Napoleonic policy had convinced him beyond all doubt that the French were only waiting for their opportunity, and that it would therefore be worse than folly to leave them to select their own time for drawing the sword.

Therefore it was that he had left Varzin with the firm intention to precipitate a decisive struggle or to resign. Thus, in his "Rejoinder" to certain statements in the Crown Prince's "Diary" (published by Dr. Geffcken), Bismarck said: "At the very beginning of the Diary it is said that, on the 13th July, 1870, I looked upon peace as secured, and therefore wanted to return to Varzin. As a matter of fact—which can be proved by documentary evidence—H.R.H. knew at the time that I regarded war as necessary, and was resolved to go to Varzin only after retiring from office if war were avoided. H.R.H. was at one with me about this, as appears from the alleged entry on the 15th of July, where it is said:—

" 'Bismarck tells me that he, too, is going with Moltke and Roon to Brandenburg to meet the King (returning from Ems). On the way thither he ex-

\* See p. 130.

plained with great clearness and a seriousness worthy of the occasion, free from all the little jokes which he is otherwise fond of, his views on the state of our relations with France, enabling me now to perceive that any yielding on our part for the sake of peace was already impossible. He and Moltke have no great opinion of the strength and organisation of the French army.'"

When the train, conveying the King and those who had thus gone to Brandenburg to meet him, ran into the station at Berlin, which was filled and surrounded by dense crowds, Herr von Thile (of the Foreign Office) handed to Bismarck a telegram with the parliamentary statement of the French Ministry, which had just arrived. It was read to his Majesty, who said, "That looks very warlike; we shall have at once to mobilise three Army Corps."

On this Bismarck remarked, "Your Majesty, that won't be enough, for the French are already mobilising their whole army."

Then the King asked Bismarck to read the whole despatch once more. "But that is a declaration of war," he then exclaimed, with deep emotion. "And are we really going, then, to have such a war? Yes," he continued, "it means war. Well, then, so be it, in God's name!"

Then the Crown Prince turned to the group of officers behind him with the cry, "*Krieg, mobil!*" after which the King burst into tears and warmly embraced his son. That same night the order to mobilise went forth to the troops, while corresponding telegrams were flashed to the South German States.

Conversing with Lord Augustus Loftus on the eve of the war, Bismarck said that "Great Britain should have forbidden France to enter on it. She was in a position to do so, and her interests, as well as those of Europe, demanded it of her. If Germany should be victorious, of which he had every confidence, the balance of power would be preserved ; but if victory were accorded to France, she would be mistress of Europe. England could have prevented this by her action now."

The same writer also says that at an evening entertainment at Bismarck's, several days after the declaration of war, the Chancellor said he had just received the visit of a secret agent from Paris, who had assured him that, if Prussia would only guarantee France the possession of Belgium, she might annex the South German States, including Bavaria, and that thus the impending conflict between the two nations might after all be obviated.

Shortly after the declaration of war, King William said to Bismarck :

"What are we now going to do with France ?"

"It will be '66 over again," returned the Chancellor.

When General Phil Sheridan, Commissioner from the United States army, presented himself to Bismarck at Pont-à-Mousson on the eve of Gravelotte, the Chancellor exhibited at times deep anxiety as to the impending conflict, but his conversation was mostly devoted to the state of public sentiment in America, about which he seemed much concerned, inquiring repeatedly as to which side—France or Prussia—was charged with bringing on the war. On the way to

the battlefield early next morning Bismarck again recurred to the state of public opinion in America with reference to the war. He also talked much about the American form of government, and said that, in early life, his tendencies were all toward republicanism, but that family influence had overcome all his preferences, and intimated that, after adopting a political career, he found that Germany was not sufficiently advanced for republicanism. He had been reluctant, he said, to enter upon this political career, and had always longed to be a soldier, but that here again family opposition had turned him from the field of his choice into the sphere of diplomacy.

A little later the Chancellor again indulged in the same vein of thought to two other acquaintances. One day after dinner at Faulquemont he sat for a long while talking with Herr Stieber, chief of the field detective police; and after a short review of his past life, the Chancellor ended with the remark, "So now you see what can be made out of a Pomeranian Junker who used to be hated and abused by every one."

Afterwards at Versailles the Chancellor was called upon by the member of a Junker family, Otto von Corvin, who had begun life as an officer, but had ruined his prospects during the revolutionary time (1848); he had been condemned to death, and had then taken to journalism and other make-shift courses. Bismarck listened to his story with the keenest interest, and then remarked: "Well, now, you see how fate ordains our affairs. The same sentiments and convictions led you to prison, and me to the

place where I now stand. . . . We were born and brought up pretty much in the same circumstances, and with the same tendencies and prejudices. I, too, caused my family great uneasiness by my advanced ideas. I began very early to dream of a united Germany. Whenever any one asked me abroad what my country was, I never said that I was a Prussian—I know not why—but always that I was a German.”

Curiously enough, the mother of the man to whom Bismarck now made this confession had eloped with the author of the famous *Preussenlied*—“I am a Prussian, know ye then my colours?”

At Gravelotte Bismarck had watched the course of the battle throughout the day, been in the thickest of the shell-fire, and endured great privations from hunger and heat. “I had sent my horse to water,” he afterwards said, “and stood in the dusk near a battery, which was firing. The French fell silent, but when we thought that their artillery were disabled, they were only concentrating their guns and mitrailleuses for a last great push. Suddenly they began quite a fearful fire with shells and such-like—an incessant cracking and rolling, whizzing and screaming, in the air. We were separated from the King, who had been sent back by Roon. I stayed by the battery, and thought to myself, ‘If we have to retire, put yourself on the first gun-carriage you can find.’ We now expected that the French infantry would support the attack, when they might have taken me prisoner unless the artillery carried me away with them. But the attack failed, and at last the horses returned, and

I set off back to the King. We had gone out of the rain into the gutter, for where we had ridden to the shells were falling thick, whereas before they had passed over our heads. Next morning we saw the deep holes they had ploughed in the ground."

Subsequently, at Versailles, when dining once with the Crown Prince, Bismarck began to speak of the privations he had suffered in the field. The Commissariat Department, he complained, did not sufficiently look after the wants of headquarters, the maxim being that every one could buy comforts for himself with his own money. On the day of Gravelotte, for example, they had ridden out at two or three in the early morning and had nothing whatever to eat till night. But at last he succeeded in buying five eggs for twenty francs. Being hungry himself, he at once consumed two of these, and rode off with the other three to General Sheridan and another person, with whom he fraternally shared the spoil, without, however, telling them of his previous feast.

Of this conversation a note was made at the time by Herr von Freydorf, Minister of Baden, who also wrote: "If the high foreheads and bearded warriors (of the King) reminded one of Wallenstein's banquet, the younger *entourage* of the Crown Prince looked like a scene out of the *Mousquetaires de la Reine*." Only Bismarck certainly belonged to the Wallenstein group.

After the battle of Gravelotte, "Bismarck and I," wrote General Sheridan, "went off to look for shelter for ourselves. . . . At last the Count fixed on a house whose upper floor, we learned, was unoccupied, though

the lower one was covered with wounded. Mounting a creaky ladder—there was no stairway—to the upper storey, we found a good-sized room, with three large beds, one of which the Chancellor assigned to the Duke of Mecklenburg and aide, and another to Count Bismarck-Bohlen and me, reserving the remaining one for himself. Each bed, as is common in Germany and Northern France, was provided with a feather tick ; but the night being warm these spreads were thrown off, and, discovering that they would make a comfortable shake-down on the floor, I slept there, leaving Bismarck-Bohlen unembarrassed by companionship—at least, of a human kind.”

Next morning, “our route led through the village of Gorze, and here we found the streets so obstructed with waggons that I feared it would take us the rest of the day to get through, for the teamsters would not pay the slightest heed to the cries of our postilions. The Count was equal to the emergency, however, for, taking a pistol from behind his cushion and bidding me keep my seat, he jumped out and quickly began to clear the street effectively, ordering waggons to the right and left. Marching in front of the carriage and making way for us till we were well through the blockade, he then resumed his seat, remarking, ‘This is not a very dignified business for the Chancellor of the German Confederation, but it’s the only way to get through.’

“On another occasion Count Bismarck was particularly unfortunate, being billeted in a very small and uncomfortable house, where, visiting him to learn more fully what was going on, I found him wrapped



in a shabby old dressing-gown, hard at work. He was established in a very small room, whose only furnishings consisted of a table—at which he was writing—a couple of rough chairs, and the universal feather-bed, this time made on the floor in one corner of the room. On my remarking upon the limited character of his quarters, the Count replied, with great good-humour, that they were all right, and that he should get along well enough. Even the tramp of his clerks in the attic and the clanking of his orderlies' sabres below did not disturb him. He said, in fact, he would have no grievance at all were it not for a guard of Bavarian soldiers stationed about the house—for his safety, he presumed—the sentinels from which insisted on protecting and saluting the Chancellor of the North German Confederation in season and out of season, a proceeding that led to embarrassment sometimes, as he was much troubled with a severe dysentery. Notwithstanding his trials, however, and in the midst of the correspondence on which he was so intently engaged, he graciously took time to explain to me that the sudden movement northward from Bar-le-Duc was the result of information that Marshal MacMahon was endeavouring to relieve Metz by marching along the Belgian frontier—'a blundering manœuvre' remarked the Chancellor, 'which cannot be accounted for unless it has been brought about by the political situation of the French.'"

On the day of Sedan, when the situation of the French had become utterly desperate, the King ordered the firing to be stopped, and at once de-

spatched one of his staff—Colonel von Bronsart—with a demand for a surrender. Just as this officer was starting off, Sheridan remarked to Bismarck that Napoleon himself would likely be one of the prizes ; but the Count, incredulous, replied, “ Oh, no ; the old fox is too cunning to be caught in such a trap ; he has doubtless slipped off to Paris ”—a belief which the American General found to prevail pretty generally about headquarters.

About this time Prince Putbus was sent by General Blumenthal to stop the fire of a battery of which the shells seemed to be threatening some German troops. Having done this, the Prince, on his way back, fell into conversation with some French prisoners, who told him—to his great surprise—that they had seen Napoleon that very morning. The Prince deemed the news important enough to be communicated to a member of the King’s staff, who thereupon imparted it to his Majesty. The latter, who had been talking with Bismarck and Moltke, appeared to be rather put out than otherwise by the intelligence, and, sending for Prince Putbus, signified to him, somewhat crossly, that he ought not to have come with such “ Tartar news ” [cock-and-bull] story unless he had the best of reasons for believing it.

Confirmation, however, was quick to come in ; but before this, Bismarck had turned to Prince Putbus with the remark, “ If this be true, peace is farther off than ever.” All the others had concluded that peace would ensue on the capture of Napoleon ; but Bismarck instantly perceived that there would then be no one in his place to treat for peace. The incident

was afterwards referred to as a striking instance of the Chancellor's lightning quickness of perception.

While King William was writing his note, accepting the proffered sword of Napoleon, Bismarck, wrote an English newspaper-correspondent, "came up to Generals Sheridan, Forsyth, and myself, and heartily shook our hands. 'Let me congratulate you most sincerely, Count,' said General Sheridan. 'I can only compare the surrender of Napoleon to that of General Lee at Appomatox Court House.' When it was my turn to grasp the Chancellor's hand, I could not help saying, after I had warmly congratulated him, 'You must feel proud, Count Bismarck, of having so largely contributed to the winning of to-day's victory.'

"'Oh, no, my dear sir,' was the modest answer; 'I am no strategist, and have nothing to do with the winning of battles. What I am proud of is that the Bavarians, the Saxons, and the Württembergers have not only been on our side, but have had so large a share—the largest share—in the glory of the day. That they are with us, and not against us—that is my doing. I don't think the French will say now that the South Germans will not fight for our common Fatherland.'"

Riding up to the Crown Prince of Württemberg—on the capitulation of Sedan being completed—Bismarck shook him warmly by the hand, and said, "This day has secured and strengthened the German Sovereigns, as well as the Conservative principle among us."

After the battle Sheridan was tired to death, but

Bismarck-Bohlen (the Chancellor's nephew) bore with him one great comfort—some excellent brandy. Offering the flask to his uncle, he said, "You've had a hard day of it ; won't you refresh yourself?" The Chancellor, without wasting time to answer, raised the bottle to his lips, exclaiming, "Here's to the unification of Germany!"—a sentiment, wrote Sheridan, which the gurgling of an astonishingly long drink seemed to emphasise. The Count then handed the bottle back to his nephew, who, shaking it, ejaculated, "Why, we can't pledge you in return—there's nothing left!" to which came the waggish response, "I beg pardon ; it was so dark I couldn't see!"

No chronicle of Bismarck's table-talk could well claim to be complete that did not include his own account—which he drew up for the King—of his conversation with the fallen Napoleon over the little deal table in an upper room of the weaver's cottage near Donchery. On the morning after the battle of Sedan, Napoleon had driven forth from the fortress in search of the Chancellor, so as to make a personal appeal for milder terms of capitulation. Learning from an *aide-de-camp*, who had ridden on before, that the Emperor was coming to speak with him Bismarck rose, dressed hurriedly, and rode off in the direction of Sedan. He had not ridden far when he encountered Napoleon in a hired carriage with several attendant officers ; and on his Majesty asking whether King William had not appointed a place for him to go to, Bismarck replied that he did not know, but that he would meanwhile be glad to place his own quarters at Donchery at the Emperor's disposal.

"The Emperor," wrote Bismarck, "accepted the offer, and drove slowly towards Donchery, but (hesitating on account of the possible crowd) stopped at a solitary cottage a few hundred paces from the Meuse bridge leading to the townlet, and asked me if he could remain there. I requested my nephew, Count Bismarck-Bohlen, who had followed me, to inspect the house, and he reported that, though free from wounded, it was mean and dirty. '*N'importe*,' said Napoleon; and I ascended with him a rickety, narrow staircase. In a small, one-windowed room, with a deal table and two rush-bottomed chairs, we sat alone for an hour—a great contrast to our last meeting in the Tuileries, in '67.

"Our conversation was a difficult thing, wanting, as I did, to avoid touching on topics which could not but painfully affect the man whom God's mighty hand had cast down.

"He complained at first of this unhallowed war, which he had not desired. He had been driven into it by the pressure of public opinion.

"I rejoined that neither had any one with us wished war—the King least of all. We had looked upon the Spanish question as Spanish, and not German; and we had expected from his friendly relations with the princely house of Hohenzollern that the hereditary Prince would easily have come to an understanding with him.

"Then he turned to speak of the present situation. As to that, he wished above all for a more favourable capitulation.

"I explained that I could not enter upon a dis-

cussion on that point, as it was a purely military question, on which Moltke must decide.

"Then we left the subject to speak of a possible peace.

"He answered, he was a prisoner, and therefore not in a position to decide; and when I asked him whom he considered competent for that, he referred me to the Government in Paris.

"I remarked to him that, in that case, things were just where they were yesterday, and that we must stand by our former demands with regard to the army of Sedan, so as to have some pledge that the results of the battle of yesterday should not be lost to us.

"Moltke, who had been summoned by me, had now arrived. He was of the same opinion, and went to the King to tell him so.

"Outside, in front of the house, the Emperor praised our army and its generalship; and when I admitted to him that the French had also fought well, he came back to the conditions of the capitulation, and asked whether it was not possible for us to allow the Corps shut up in Sedan to cross the Belgian frontier, and there lay down their arms and be 'interned.'

"I tried again to make him understand that this was a military question, not for me to decide without an understanding with Moltke. And as he had explained that, as a prisoner, he could not take upon himself the Imperial powers of the Government, the negotiations on these questions could only be conducted with the General-in-Command at Sedan.

"Meantime, efforts had been made to find him better accommodation, and the officers of the General Staff had discovered that the château of Bellevue, near Fresnois, where I had first met him, was suitable for his reception, and was not yet filled with the wounded. I told him so, and advised him to settle himself there, as the little weaver's house was not comfortable, and he perhaps needed rest. We would inform the King that he was there. He agreed to this, and I rode back to Donchery to dress myself (in my full uniform). Then I conducted him, with a guard of honour consisting of a squadron of the first Cuirassier regiment, to Bellevue.

"At the conference which now began the Emperor wished to have the King present—from whom he expected softness and good-heartedness; but he also wanted me to take part.

"I, on the contrary, was determined that the military men, who can be harder, should have the whole affair to settle. So I whispered to an officer, as we went upstairs, that he was to call me out in about five minutes—the King wanted to speak with me; and he did so. With regard to the King, the Emperor was told that he could not see him till after the capitulation was settled."

General Sheridan had been a witness of Bismarck's meeting with the fallen Emperor, and noticed how the Chancellor, when abreast of the Emperor's carriage, dismounted, and, walking up to it, saluted his Majesty in a quick, brusque way that seemed to startle him. Seeing Sheridan standing near the gate of the cottage, after his interview with Napoleon, Bismarck joined

the General for a moment, and asked whether he noticed how the Emperor had started when first they met; and on Sheridan saying that he had, Bismarck added, "Well, it must have been due to my manner, not my words, for those were, 'I salute your Majesty just as if you were my own King.'" As a matter of fact, the Emperor had probably started at sight of the revolver in Bismarck's belt.

Afterwards at one of his parliamentary *soirées*, when the talk came to be of the French indemnity, Bismarck referred to his historic meeting with Napoleon in the weaver's cottage near Donchery.

"After sitting for nearly an hour opposite Napoleon in the little room of the cottage near Sedan, I felt precisely as I had once done when a young man at a ball after engaging a partner for a cotillon, to whom I could not say a single word, and of whom no one would relieve me."

Keeping pace with the tide of victory, Bismarck reached Versailles on October 5th, and here he remained—quartered in the house of Madame Jessé in the Rue de Provence—till March 6th following, exactly five months.

On the way from Sedan to Versailles, he had quartered himself for some little time on the Hebrew millionaire, the first cognisance of whose family had been a "red sign-board" (Roth-schild) in the Judengasse at Frankfort; and of his experience at Ferrières the Chancellor subsequently told the following story at one of his parliamentary *soirées* (March 1873):

"Late one night, after a ride of several hours, I



arrived, tired and hungry, at Baron von Rothschild's celebrated château. To my modest request for something to eat and drink, and a bed, the major-domo replied, with a flood of pompous French phrases, implying that he had nothing for me—taking me for an officer. In this portly representative of the Paris millionaire I at once recognised a son of the Free City of Frankfort, and I asked him in German whether he knew what a truss of straw was. The honest Frankforter looked at me in amazement, and then I explained to him that on such bundles of straw recalcitrant major-domos could be bound with their posterior parts upwards—the rest he would understand. In less than a quarter of an hour all that I had asked for was forthcoming.”

Dining with the Crown Prince soon after his arrival at Versailles, the Chancellor met Mr. John L. O'Sullivan, who had formerly been United States Minister at Lisbon, and was now making himself an intolerable busy-body in the cause of peace. He had come to General Sheridan with a letter from Mr. Washburne, the American Minister in Paris, and thus managed to fasten himself on the Crown Prince.

At dinner he sat next Bismarck, and bored the Chancellor to death with his millennial theories of neutrality and what not. At parting Bismarck gave him his hand, saying that he was very glad to have met him. “But Mister Sullivan,” he added, “a strange thing often happens to me. For in the afternoon I make the acquaintance of a very pleasant gentleman, and next day I am reluctantly compelled to get him turned out of Versailles.” O'Sullivan repeated these

words to his friends the same evening, without in the least suspecting that they had any reference to himself. On returning to his hôtel, however, he found waiting at his door a Prussian officer who at once gave him his marching orders—so that there was an immediate end of “Mister” O’Sullivan and his inconvenient plans of mediation and neutrality. Home, the spiritualist, shared the same fate.

A few days later (October 12th) Lieutenant von Usslar conducted into the presence of the Chancellor a personage, just come out of Paris, who desired to see him. His passport bore the name and title of “M. Angel de Valleyo, Vice-President of the Spanish Finance Commission in Paris, attached to the Spanish Embassy.” In corroboration of his identity the bearer of this passport displayed upon his breast the sparkling orders of the Star of Isabella and the Cross of St. John of Jerusalem.

To such a distinguished stranger Bismarck could not but extend the courtesy due to his rank and title. He invited him to dinner, his other guests being his nephew, Count Bismarck-Bohlen, and Count Hatzfeldt (afterwards Ambassador in London). The Chancellor’s dinner-table was lit by candles stuck into the mouths of empty wine-bottles. On the other hand, his butler presently appeared with several full ones. The Count tried one—*vin de Nuits*—but it suited not his taste. A second was uncorked and found better. Smacking his lips after sipping it, and holding up the roseate nectar between him and the candle-light, “Ah,” he says, “this is excellent; it is from Romanée.”

"You are a *connoisseur* of wine, M. Le Comte," observes the Spaniard, "and so I trust you will have every reason to feel satisfied with the cellar of this house."

"Ah no, you are mistaken," replies the Chancellor, "this wine here comes from the 'Hôtel des Reservoirs.' I buy everything that I want; I don't wish my sons to have ever any cause to blush for me. That will also explain to you why I must content myself with empty bottles for candlesticks."

Thinking that he could now perceive a faint smile of incredulity stealing across the handsome features of his distinguished guest, the Chancellor turned to his butler.

"Tell me," he asks, "how much do we pay for this Romanée?"

"Six or eight thalers" (24s.), "Excellency," replies the man. "I think it is eight."

And then Bismarck proceeded to speak of his own cellar in Berlin.

"Yes," he says, "an excellent cellar, seeing that it all comes from that celebrated dealer, the Marquis de T——, whom you must have met in Paris. He is the son of a rich landowner, who was called simply Lemarquis. But after getting himself appointed to the French Legation at Frankfort, he appended to his name that of an estate belonging to his father, and thus became Lemarquis de T——. After that he gradually reconciled himself to the practice of others who committed the mistake of writing his name in two parts—till at last he took to the writing of it himself in this manner. Once he came to Berlin;

and perceiving how very pleased he was (for I knew the story) when addressed as 'Marquis,' I invited him to a diplomatic dinner, when he found his menu under his napkin inscribed round and large with his aristocratic title. The consequence was that next day I received from him the present of a case of fine Burgundy, which had just reached him from his place in France; and ever since then he has continued to serve me to my complete satisfaction."

After that the talk came to be of the Parisians, who, according to the Spanish *attaché*, were firmly—nay, fiercely—resolved on resistance to the death.

But at such an idea Bismarck scoffed.

"Their vanity has kept them up so far," quoth the Chancellor, "their vanity, which is the chief feature of the French character. But in the face of real suffering this quality will not hold out. No one will ever make me believe that Paris is a 'heroic' city; but, be that as it may, we shall soon be in it."

"You will scarcely do it by main force," says the Spaniard, "unless you decide to destroy the city by bombardment, and sacrifice a large portion of your army in storming it."

"How the thing is to be done is not my affair," rejoins the Chancellor, "but that of our Generals. For my own part I would never advise recourse to an escalade—seeing that it would cost more than it is worth. But with a little patience we shall get possession of the place all the same, thanks to the two allies that we have inside—Famine and the Reds."

"As for the Reds," says the Spaniard, "they seem

to be kept pretty well in hand by the National Guard. And as for Famine—that is still a long way off.”

“Oh, well, we can wait for months yet, but enter Paris we shall.”

“But if the matter lasts as long as that,” suggests the Don, “are you not afraid of the approach of a relieving army, or of the intervention of all Europe?”

“Where is such an army to come from?” replies the Chancellor. “From the Loire, where some battalions, more of the character of an armed mob than of regular troops, have just been scattered? From Metz, where the starving garrison are sending out daily flags of truce to treat for capitulation? Pray get rid of your illusions. France has no longer got any army, nor will she have one for years. And as for the neutral Powers, they are at least as friendly to us as to France, whose self-conceit and restless, aggressive policy have been a standing danger to Europe for the last two centuries. Besides, it seems to me that all the other Powers will soon have quite enough to do with their own affairs. In the worst of cases, however, we should know how to cope with any foreign interference with a war into which we entered at our own risk and peril.”

“In Paris,” throws in the Don, “great hopes were entertained of M. Thiers’s mission to the Courts of Europe.”

“Bah!” says the Chancellor. “Believe me, this mission had much less to do with peace than with the accession of the Prince of Orleans. The French are fools if they don’t see that. But perhaps they do see it, . . . and I can quite understand that they should

prefer this to the dictatorship of M. Gambetta, this briefless barrister, whose whole political outfit consists of some coffee-house cackle and three Chamber speeches stuffed with liberal phrases."

"I do not think," rejoins the Spaniard, "that people in Paris have looked at the mission of M. Thiers in this light. Anyhow, it was said that England and Russia had agreed to intervene."

"Good Heavens! What is the next thing that will be said in Paris? England and Russia going hand in hand? Ha! ha! ha!" And with that the Chancellor burst out into a loud laugh, looking as he did so at Count Hatzfeldt (who merely responded with a discreet smile, as he thought of the Black Sea comedy now in active preparation), and then went on:

"And you Spaniards, do you also mean to join this terrible coalition against us? I expected that you would even have become our allies in the present war."

"M. le Comte is pleased to jest," observes M. Angel de Vallejo.

"Far from it. It is to some extent on your account that we are waging this war, and I should have thought it quite natural of you to join us. Thus it was that, on the day after war was declared, I asked Marshal Prim what was the strength of the contingent he proposed to place in the field. I was very surprised to hear that the Marshal now shrank from the consequences of his policy."

"Beg pardon," pleads the proud and patriotic Don, "but it is just as little the habit of Spain as of Marshal Prim to retire. Had the Prince of Hohenzollern not withdrawn from his candidature, and if

we had had to stand up for our rights, we should have fought France."

"Pity that it was not so," says Bismarck, with a sigh, "for France would then have been taken in front and rear, and by this time we should have been in Paris. What an awakening that would have been for your nation, which has been slumbering so long!" Then, after a pause, "But what, then, are Marshal Prim's present intentions?"

"Ah, that I know not," says the Spanish diplomatist; "the Marshal, it is true, honours me with his confidence, though not to the extent of acquainting me with his political plans."

"Very well," quoth the Chancellor, "but as you will soon have an opportunity of seeing him, you may tell him from me to think of it. I am not the man to meddle with the affairs of others, and Prussia has not the slightest intention of interfering with the policy of Spain or of any other country. At the same time, it seems to me that your selection of a German prince for your King would have been a guarantee of your regeneration. For look you, the Latin race is now used up. I admit that in its time it has done great things, but its mission is now at an end; it is now fated to dwindle, and possibly even to disappear altogether—as a whole at least. This is a process which far-seeing statesmen in Latin (Romanic) countries should expedite instead of exhausting themselves in fruitless endeavours to thwart the decrees of destiny. Our Hohenzollern Prince on your throne would have infused some German life and energy into the Spaniards, without humiliating them. The

German race is young and strong, and possessed of all the virtues and spirit of enterprise which formerly distinguished yours. The future belongs to the northern nations, which will play the glorious part that has been allotted them for the good of humanity."

The conversation then turned on the course of the war and the prospects of peace, Bismarck saying that all he wanted now was a Government to deal with, were it even one of Robert Macaire ; nor was he at all certain that Napoleon would not after all be re-instated. For what was it that France could reproach him with ? Of having incurred defeat while endeavouring to gratify the dearest wish of his nation—the conquest of the Rhine.

To the remark of his Castilian visitor that the cession of Alsace-Lorraine did not seem to him to offer the prospect of a lasting peace, Bismarck replied :

"In any case such is the will of the King. But whatever may be the condition of peace, it will be nothing but an armistice. France is much too vain ever to forgive us for her defeats. Even supposing that we were to agree to quit France to-morrow without demanding compensation of any kind, the national vanity would feel none the less wounded, and the French would force another war upon us as soon as ever they could. Therefore, in the interest of Germany, as well as of all Europe, our policy must aim at enfeebling France as much as possible, and rendering her incapable for a long time of breaking the general peace."

Hereupon there followed an interval of gloomy



silence till at last the Spaniard, plucking up courage, ventured on the remark, "You are always, M. le Comte, harping on the will of the King, whereas Europe looks upon you yourself as the supreme arbiter in this war."

"Well," replies Bismarck, "Europe is wrong if it thinks so. But it is only in France, I fancy, that this superficial view prevails. This undisciplined people, which is accustomed to be made the plaything of political adventurers, cannot comprehend our respect for monarchy, our organisation, our hierarchical system. With us, sir, there is no sovereign will but that of the King. It is he alone who wills, because he alone has the right to do so. However high my position, I am only the tool of his political will, as the Generals are equally the instruments of his military will. When his Majesty says so-and-so, it is my duty to propose measures for the execution of his ideas, and my reputation consists in this—that I have often succeeded in carrying these ideas out. For the rest, my present activity is completely subordinated to that of the Generals in the army, who are not always of my way of thinking."

After the conversation had thus lasted for several hours, the Spaniard begged for leave to retire, and Bismarck accompanied him to the door, committing him to the further care of his nephew.

"It is difficult," said the Chancellor, "to find quarters in Versailles; but I think we shall be able to put you up, and to-morrow I will do my best to procure you a passport from the military authorities."

Stepping into the carriage which was in waiting

for him, the Spaniard, five minutes later, was deposited at a house in the Rue Montbauran, where rooms had been ordered "for a personage of distinction." The orderly accompanying him said to the owner: "Do your best for this gentleman, for he is a person of great importance; he has just given me a twenty-franc piece, and his Excellency conversed with him for about three hours."

But the greatness of this important personage was of short duration. For, towards the end of the talk, Bismarck had somehow come to suspect that he was entertaining unawares some one very different in character from a Spanish angel, and even from a Spanish *attaché*. He therefore at once caused inquiries to be set afoot, the result being that "Angel de Vallejo, Vice-President of the Spanish Finance Commission," etc., proved to be identical with a writer on the *Gaulois*, Angel de Miranda by name, who had shortly before published in this print a most venomous article against Prussia, in which King William, among other things, was referred to as a "*caporal mystique*." Two days later the Chancellor's honoured guest was arrested, when what should have been found upon his person but a carefully drawn up plan of the German positions round Paris! Sent to Mayence, he was "interned" on *parole*; but that did not hinder him from profiting by the first opportunity to escape, and to amuse his friends with a recital of the circumstances under which he had successfully interviewed the German Chancellor—one of the boldest feats of journalism, perhaps, that was ever performed.

To the Spanish Don, Bismarck had spoken very bitterly about the Latin races, especially the French; but to others at Versailles he was still more contemptuously outspoken on the same subject. Apollo, who had flayed Marsyas from conceit and envy, and from the same motives had slain Niobe's children, he regarded as a perfect type of a Frenchman, who could not bear that another should play the flute better than, or even as well as he. "They are an uncleanly people, these French," he once remarked, and it is pretty certain also that he shared his wife's belief as to their utter lack of that godliness which is said to be so closely akin to the virtue of soap, water, and rough towels. "I am afraid," wrote the Countess to him from Germany, "there may be no Bibles in France, so I will send you a psalm-book by the first opportunity, that you may read the prophecy in it against the French: 'I say unto thee that the wicked shall be rooted out.'"

Of the French physique the Chancellor had but a poor opinion. "The front of one of our Landwehr companies," he once boasted, "is at least five feet longer than an equal number of the enemy." And while finding little stamina in the men, he could discover no beauty in the women. "I have travelled a good deal through France," he once observed, "and don't recollect ever having seen a pretty country girl, but plenty of ugly ones. Any few beauties there may be, go to Paris to find their market." *Politesse de cœur*, argued the Chancellor, was not a native French article at all. Whatever might be said of the phrase, the thing itself existed only among the

Germans, though the English also, it was true, might have something of the sort. Natural politeness, like an uncut diamond, was to be found among the common soldiery of King William; but the corresponding quality of the French was a counterfeit, begotten of mere envy and hatred.

Moreover, some of the best men among the French people were furnished by the German element in Alsace-Lorraine; though this element was enviously kept down by the Parisians, who ridiculed and caricatured it. The French themselves, the Chancellor laid down, were composed of Parisians and provincials, the latter being the willing helots of the former. France was a nation of ciphers—a mere crowd. It had wealth and elegance, but no individual men. They only acted in the mass. They were nothing more than thirty millions of obedient Kafirs. Under one recognised leader they were very powerful, but not so much so as the Germans could be, if not torn asunder by that infinite variety of opinion which sprang from independence of mind.\*

The feeling of duty in a man who submitted to be shot dead at his post rather than desert it, alone and in the dark, did not animate the French; but it inspired the Germans, and was due to the survival of their religious instinct, which told them that "Some One saw them when the Lieutenant did not." Theatrical posing was everything with the French, and any of them would readily submit to the lash if speechified to all the time about liberty and the dignity of man, with appropriate attitudes. "Strip

\* Compare pp. 137 and 273.

off the white skin of such a Gaul," once said the Prince, in reference to the cruel manner in which the French were carrying on the war, "and you will find a Turco."

Talking once (in 1874) with Jókai, the Hungarian poet and novelist, Bismarck said that, but for geographical and strategical considerations of an imperative kind, Germany would not have taken a single span of earth inhabited by Frenchmen. "For the French are irreconcilable, savage foes, and if you strip them of the cook, the tailor, and the hairdresser you will find nothing left in them but copper-skinned Indians."

During the siege of Paris, the Paris papers printed all kinds of abuse of the Germans, "those sauerkraut-eating barbarians." When Jules Favre went for the first time from Paris to Versailles, Bucher, the Chancellor's private secretary, had just received some smoked geese and a small barrel of sauerkraut, and these German delicacies were served as the first course at dinner, at which Favre sat beside Bismarck. Favre partook of them with an almost ravenous appetite, and not only answered Bismarck's repeated question as to whether he liked them with the most satisfactory assurances in the affirmative, but also asked the name of this "exquisite dish," which he had never tasted before. Bismarck answered, with a smile, "Oh, that's the notorious *choucroute*."

One of Bismarck's greatest pre-occupations at Versailles was to find some properly constituted French authority with whom he might treat for peace. The Empire had fallen, but no stable form of govern-

ment had taken its place. Talking once at table about the future of France, the Chancellor remarked that he would in no way seek to prevent her from establishing a Republican form of government, seeing that this was the form which would, on the whole, prove least troublesome and detrimental to Germany.

"Bonapartists, Bourbons, Orleanists—they will all equally hate us; so it is only a question which form of government will involve the least danger to us. It is the Bourbons who have done Germany most harm, and there would be no sense in our restoring to the Tuileries the descendants of those who robbed us of Alsace-Lorraine in time of peace. If this war was brought about by a woman (Empress Eugénie), peace will, at any rate, be concluded by men." \*

\* In the Reichstag afterwards Bismarck solemnly asserted himself in a position to prove "that the war of 1870 was declared in agreement with Rome, which securely reckoned on the victory of the French; and that the decision of Napoleon for peace, which only lasted half an hour, was shaken and undone by the influence of none but the Jesuits"—acting on the Empress Eugénie. Hear what is said by Lord Malmesbury: "The Duc de Gramont was an agreeable and polished man in society, but vain and impetuous, and had more liberty of action than was given by the Emperor during his former *régime* to his Foreign Ministers. The Duke himself gave me the following account of the last scene on July 14th, before the declaration of war: The Hohenzollern candidature to the throne of Spain was abandoned, and the Emperor was decidedly disposed to accept this renouncement and to patch up the quarrel, and turn this result into a diplomatic success; but his Ministers had avoided no opportunity of publishing the insult to all France, and the Press stirred the anger and vanity of the public to a pitch of mad-

But *à propos* of the Bourbons and the ravages they committed in Germany, take the following incident. Dining one day at Versailles with the Chancellor during the armistice negotiations, Jules Favre, in very bitter and reproachful language, pointed to the smoke of Saint Cloud, which was still darkening the air.

"Have you ever been in our Germany?" asked the Chancellor, with a rising touch of indignation in his tone. "And have you seen the ruins of our castles, which your armies so mercilessly burned and destroyed?"

About the same time the Chancellor had a conversation with the Mayor of Versailles, to whom he said: "With the exception of 1792, when we were carried along with the general stream of the time, Prussia has never attacked France; whereas France under Louis XIV., the Republic, and the two Napoleons, has fallen upon us no fewer than three-and-twenty times!"

Bismarck had sent for the Mayor in order to remonstrate with him on the non-payment of a fine of one hundred francs which had been levied on the town for failing to furnish a carriage that was urgently needed for the King's service, as well as to request him to keep the streets freer of crowds of sight-seers and possible assassins.

ness. None had yet taken advantage of this characteristic temper of the Emperor. Before the final resolve to declare war the Emperor, Empress, and Ministers went to St. Cloud. After some discussion, Gramont told me that the Empress, a high-spirited and impressionable woman, made a strong and most excited address, declaring that 'war was inevitable if the honour of France was to be sustained.' "

"Well, M. le Maire, it seems that we shall have to spend the winter with you, though I should very much like to return to Berlin."

"That will be equally disagreeable for us," replied the Mayor, "but why must it, then, be so?"

"For the simple reason that without elections there can be no peace. There is no one with whom we can at present treat, neither the Comte de Chambord, nor the Orleanists, nor the Empress Regent. We shall be obliged to bring back Napoleon and treat with him."

"Oh, the Lord forbid! That would be the worst insult you could offer the nation. . . . If you, M le Comte, will only pass me into Paris, I will communicate to the National Government all the considerations which you have set forth to me."

"I should not advise you to do that; for any proposals that come from me are sure of rejection in Paris, and they would infer that we no longer wished to continue the war. America is the only country which is really concerning itself about the fate of France. Four American Generals have done what they could. They went into Paris and saw the members of your Government, but came back to me and said, 'There is nothing to be done; no one will hear of peace—with the exception of Trochu; and even he says that the Parisians have not yet been sufficiently beaten.'"

"Then I will rather not go into Paris," said the Mayor. "At the same time I am happy to think that, in spite of the bitterness of the struggle between us, the rights of humanity have not yet been lost sight



of on either side. Two examples will suffice. This very day the Town Council voted a sum of fifty francs as a reward to a Prussian non-commissioned officer for his gallantry in helping to extinguish a fire. On the other hand, a Prussian soldier, who had the misfortune to fall from a waggon and break his leg, was carried into the house of an inhabitant of Versailles, named Poidevin, and had his fractured limb set."

"Well," said Bismarck, "if this Poidevin cares to have it, you had better give him the hundred francs which we have levied upon the town as a fine for non-delivery of the vehicle that we ordered of it, and thus the matter will be settled."

Saying this the Chancellor rose and offered the Mayor his hand.

The latter, after some little hesitation, took it, with this reservation :

"But it is only to you personally, M. le Comte, that I give my hand."

Bismarck replied, with a smile :

"At the outposts our respective soldiers frequently shake hands with one another, do they not?"

The Samaritan Poidevin got his hundred francs.

It was no wonder that the Chancellor, a little later, remarked to the Crown Prince that he was beginning to feel as if he were also in the service of France, as every Frenchman now came to him for advice.

Among those who had journeyed to Versailles to help in negotiating the treaties between North and South, was Herr von Freydorf, Minister of Baden, who congratulated Bismarck on the final success of his great work, the Chancellor having previously

remarked to him in Berlin that the union of the South with the North would as surely follow as water ran down the mountain side. Among other things, Bismarck now said, "We must not aim at doing the work of our sons and grandsons." "But it is already done," replied Von Freydorf.

Bismarck now related how he had (in France) come across some letters of Benedetti to the Emperor, dating from the year 1866, and referring to his confidential conversations with himself (the Chancellor), which showed, on one hand, that he had always "poured out pure wine to the French," and then nourished the plan of unifying North Germany first and the South with it afterwards, and, on the other, that he had never made promises of any kind, contenting himself with treating the proposals of Napoleon in a "dilatory" manner.

Bismarck had summoned to Versailles from Berlin representatives of the leading parties in the Reichstag, in order to discuss with them the treaties with the South German States ; but a Progressist (Radical) had not been included in their number.

"What's the use?" exclaimed the Chancellor. "For they are ever harping on the unattainable. They are, in fact, like the Russians, who always want to eat cherries in winter and oysters in summer."

The Crown Prince had said that the *Volkszeitung*, the organ of this cherry-and-oyster party, always hit the nail on the head in discussing public questions, though a little later he had to record in his Diary that its further circulation at Versailles had been forbidden by the Minister of War. The fact is that Bismarck

looked upon the Crown Prince as being quite as much devoted to the unattainable as the Progressists were ; and this is proved by the following conversation—recorded by the Prince himself—which took place between the two at the time when the negotiations between North and South for national union threatened after all to come to grief :—

“Conversation with Bismarck about the German question, which he would like to see decided, but, with a shrug of the shoulders, explains all the difficulties, asking what should be done with the South Germans, and whether I wish them to be threatened.

“I reply, ‘Yes, indeed ; there would be no danger in doing that ; let us act firmly and imperiously, and you will see I was right in asserting that you have not yet any proper consciousness of your power.’

“Bismarck would hear nothing whatever of threats, all the less as, in case we were forced to resort to extreme measures, such a course would throw these States into the arms of Austria. Thus, on assuming office (in 1862), he had firmly resolved to bring about war between Prussia and Austria, but had taken good care not to speak about his design on that or any other occasion to his Majesty before he deemed the proper time to have come for doing so. Similarly, the development of the German question must be left to time.

“I replied that, as representing the future, I could not view such delay with indifference, arguing that it would not be necessary to use force, and that we could quietly wait and watch whether Bavaria and Würtemberg ventured to join Austria. Nothing was

easier, I argued, than to have the Emperor proclaimed by the majority of German Sovereigns now gathered here, and also to procure their approval of a Constitution with a supreme head answering to the just demands of the German people. This would bring pressure to bear which the Kings could not resist.

"Bismarck rejoined that I stood alone with these views, and that in order to gain the wished-for goal it would be more correct to let the Reichstag take the initiative.

"On my referring to the sentiments of Baden, Oldenburg, Weimar, and Coburg, he defended himself by referring to the will of the King.

"I answered that I knew very well his opposition alone was sufficient to make such a scheme as this impossible of acceptance by his Majesty ; to which he replied that I was reproaching him, and that he knew of quite other persons who deserved this. And then again I must in political questions, he said, take into account the great independence of the King himself, his Majesty reading through every important despatch, and even correcting it. He regretted that the question of the Emperor and of the Upper House had been discussed at all, as offence had thus been given to Bavaria and Würtemberg.

"I said that it was Dalwigk who had broached it.

"Bismarck averred that my opinions, thus expressed, could only prove hurtful, saying that the Crown Prince should not give vent to views of this kind at all.

"I at once protested in the most emphatic manner

against my mouth being closed in this way, especially as in a question thus affecting the future I felt bound to leave no one in doubt as to *my* opinion in particular ; besides which it lay with his Majesty alone to instruct me as to matters which I was free to discuss or not, even if it were assumed that I was not yet old enough to judge for myself.

"Bismarck said that if the Crown Prince commanded he would act in accordance with his views.

"I protested against this, as I had no commands to give him, whereupon he declared that, for his part, he would be very glad to make way for any other person whom I might deem more competent than he to conduct affairs ; but that until then he must act upon his own principles to the best of his ability and knowledge of all determining circumstances.

"We then went on to speak of questions of detail, and finally I remarked that I had perhaps spoken in rather an animated manner, but that I could not be expected to remain indifferent in view of a 'world-historic' moment which was being neglected."

Bismarck's chief difficulty lay in the fact that the process of unification had to be rendered acceptable to all the Federal States in such a way as to make each of them feel assured that it would lose nothing by the change. There were made, in consequence, the most varied and curious reservations, which still exist. When everything seemed in train, the enterprise nearly came to grief over the Bavarian "caterpillar helmet," which the Bavarians did not like to sacrifice, but which some very exalted Prussian Generals

would not suffer in the German Army. The latter only gave way when Bismarck said to them, "Well, if you persist, history will say that it was impossible to found the German Empire in 1871 because the Generals could not endure the Bavarian caterpillar helmet."

The treaties between North and South were finally drawn up to the satisfaction of the respective Governments, but they still had to be sanctioned by the Reichstag, and Bismarck was mortally afraid that, after all, this body might reject them as being too indulgent to Bavaria. Not insisting on his pound of flesh from the ideal point of view of the politician, the Chancellor had been content to sign such treaties with the South as secured simple union while sparing Southern prejudices and special rights. To him half a loaf had always been better than no bread, but he was afraid that the Reichstag, with its doctrinaire orators, would not share his opinion. To Count Frankenberg—who said he could not believe that the Reichstag would ever erect its own tombstone by the rejection of the treaties, which must fill the German people with a savage sorrow—Bismarck remarked :

"You are quite right. Germany will grieve, and our enemies around will rejoice. We ourselves would not perhaps take the thing so seriously, but other countries would point to our dissensions and disbelieve in the possibility of our ever becoming one. The conclusion of peace which we are now approaching would be rendered infinitely more difficult and unfavourable for us. How can we demand Alsace-

Lorraine unless we do so as a united nation? I hear"—starting up from his seat,—“that the Liberals insist upon an Emperor; and that they shall have—I can promise them. The necessary steps have already been taken.”

Happily Bismarck's fears for the fate of the treaties proved groundless, and in due time a parliamentary deputation came from Berlin to Versailles, and presented King William with an address praying his Majesty “to consecrate the work of unification by accepting the Imperial crown of Germany,” which had been offered him by the King of Bavaria in the name of his fellow-Sovereigns.

But there was some difficulty as to the precise form of the title which was now to be assumed by the King of Prussia as premier Sovereign of the united Fatherland. “The King,” said Bismarck one day, “still has his doubts between ‘German Emperor’ and ‘Emperor of Germany,’ but he rather inclines to the latter. I cannot see much difference between the two. It is a little like the question of the *Homoousians* and the *Homoiousians*, in the days of the Councils.”

On another occasion, when the conversation drifted into a learned discussion on the same subject, Bismarck asked, “Does any one know the Latin for sausage?” “*Farcimentum*,” replied one. “*Farcimen*,” said another. “*Farcimentum vel farcimen*, whichever you please,” said the Chancellor, smiling; “*nescio quid mihi magis farcimentum esset*” (I don't know which of the two I should consider the more made-up name).

Talking with the Crown Prince, however, on the

day before the proclamation of the Empire, Bismarck displayed less indifference on the subject. Said the Prince in his Diary :—

“ After noon, with the King, a council composed of Bismarck, Schleinitz (Master of the Ceremonies), and me, lasting three hours, in an over-heated room, about title, succession to the throne, etc. While discussing the title Bismarck confesses that previously, at the discussion on the Constitution, the Bavarian plenipotentiaries refused to allow the title ‘ Emperor of Germany,’ and that finally, to please them, but without beforehand asking his Majesty, he agreed to the designation ‘ German Emperor.’ This title displeased the King, as it did me ; but in vain. Bismarck tried to prove that ‘ Emperor of Germany ’ implied a territorial power which we did not at all wield over the Empire, while ‘ German Emperor ’ was the natural sequel of the *Imperator Romanus*. We had to give in. However, in ordinary parlance the ‘ of Germany ’ is to be employed.”

Bismarck now became Imperial Chancellor, “ although it is so hard,” wrote the Crown Prince, “ for him to bear the same title as Beust, that he exclaimed he was getting into very bad company.”

Similarly when the Chancellor was made a Prince a little later, he observed that it was singular that he, who had always been opposed to petty Princes, should now become one of them. “ *J’ai pesté toujours contre les Princes, et voilà que le Roi m’y associe !* ”

At one of his *Frühshoppen* parties, (June 1884) Bismarck launched out into a eulogy of the Franciskaner beer which he had received as a present from



its noble brewer, at Munich, Count von Holnstein ; and this led him to dwell on the very prominent part which this Bavarian courtier had played in the proceedings which led to the proclamation of the Empire.

The capitulation of Paris, he said, was not far off. The course of events had convinced him that the moment had come for founding the German Empire, and that it was of the utmost importance for the future of this Reich that the German Sovereigns, headed by the King of Bavaria, should ask the King of Prussia to assume the Imperial dignity. After having gained the necessary assent to this at headquarters, though not without difficulty, the next thing was to find the proper person to deliver a letter to King Ludwig, who, as was well known, was very inaccessible. Count Holnstein was the only man who could be thought of for the delicate mission, and although he himself was by no means sanguine of success, he declared his readiness to start that same night and do all he could.

While the Count was packing his portmanteau, the Chancellor drew up an official letter to the King (of Bavaria), and to this he added a private one of his own—the first time he had ever done such a thing—in order to give his advice more weight. Its general aim was to convince King Ludwig that the voluntary decision of the German Sovereigns in the matter of the new Empire would be much better for their future position in that Empire than if it were to be established without their proposal or even against their wish. In all circumstances the German armies

would have to be under a central power, and the only question was this—whether the King of Bavaria would in future prefer to recognise the German Emperor or the King of Prussia as the supreme War Lord. In the former case the King of Bavaria would be co-ordinate with the King of Prussia ; in the latter, subordinate to him.

The private part of his (the Chancellor's) communication was to this effect, that not only as a statesman did he advise the King to take the initiative in the matter, but also as an old friend of the Bavarian dynasty. For it had never been forgotten in the Bismarck family that their ancient seat of Schönhausen in the Mark had been a fief of the Bavarian Henry the Lion, and therefore he (the Chancellor), as it were, now offered his urgent counsel to King Ludwig as an old and trusty vassal.

The success of Count von Holnstein's adventurous mission was complete, but great had been the Chancellor's anxiety until this was known ; and whenever in after years he went to Kissingen to take the waters, King Ludwig always made a point of placing royal equipages and other comforts at his disposal, as a proof that he had never had cause to regret acting on the advice of his " old and trusty vassal."

Years afterwards Bismarck related that King Ludwig had been true to him to the end. " Only a week before his death," he said, " I received a letter from him asking for advice, and I replied by saying that he should come to terms with his Estates. His Majesty rejoined, ' But they won't grant me money for my building purposes ; and when I can no longer

build I can no longer live.' The last time I spoke with him was in 1863, when I sat next him at dinner, and got on capitally with him in conversation. This was not in the usual style of Princes, such as 'How are you?' 'How do you like this place?' 'Have you ever been here before?' but of a wide-ranging and intellectual kind. Even then, however, the King turned his eyes up, and never looked at the person he was speaking to."

About this eccentric King's father, also, Bismarck retained a lively recollection from the time of his residence at Frankfort. Comparing King Max with his neighbour, King William of Würtemberg, the Chancellor once said: "King William was a very patriotic, jovial character, and looked upon me as a young diplomatist of much enthusiasm. Whenever I went to Munich I had to pass through a lane of palace halberdiers to the grand reception-room, where there was no such a thing as a chair for me, and I had to stand for hours discussing questions of high policy with King Max.

"But it was otherwise at Stuttgart. There, as soon as ever I got to my hotel, I was waited upon by a royal *aide-de-camp*, who asked me to go to the Schloss just as I was. There I would see the King sitting at the fireside, with one leg crossed over the other; and we would then discuss the very same questions with the utmost ease and comfort—a great contrast to Munich."

About the same time as the Chancellor told the story of Count Holnstein's trip to Hohenschwangau in the matter of King Ludwig's attitude to the question

of the Empire, he related another incident to illustrate the consideration which he had always wished to show towards the Southern States. He was treating with Thiers for the capitulation of Paris, and of the amount of its war-contribution. "Of course," he said, "I fixed this amount at very much more than I knew would be given. I said to Thiers that a large and wealthy city like Paris would feel itself insulted if I demanded less of it than a milliard francs in gold. Hereupon Thiers drew a very long face, declared that it was simply impossible to pay such a sum, and made as if to take his leave. Not forgetting my manners, I accompanied him to the door, and on the way downstairs we continued the negotiation. We had reached the last step but one when we agreed to the sum of two hundred millions. Then I went to the Emperor and suggested to him that this amount should be distributed to the Southern States, on which we had levied contributions in 1866. The Kaiser asked me to submit to him the proposal in a formal shape, but I replied, 'Your Majesty, I can't do that; for as soon as ever I, as Chancellor, put pen to paper in the matter, the thing is spoilt. It is for your Majesty, as Commander-in-Chief, to do that.' Thus I remained alone, and the matter fell through."

One of the collateral consequences of the German victories over the French had been the extinction of the Pope's temporal power. This power had been maintained by the presence of a French garrison at Rome; but when, after Sedan, that garrison was withdrawn, the Italians, in completion of their own national

unity, battered their way into the Eternal City, and forced the Pope to forsake the Quirinal for the Vatican. It then became a serious question with his Holiness whether he should not seek a refuge in some other country (as some of his predecessors had done at Avignon), and he even sent an emissary to Versailles to sound King William as to the possibility of his taking up his residence somewhere in Germany. Under date November 12th, the Crown Prince wrote: "Ledochowski (Archbishop of Posen) inquires whether the Pope can be received in Prussia. Bismarck would regard it as a gigantic mistake of Pio Nono to leave Rome, but says that his residence in Germany would have a good effect, as the close contemplation of Romish Sacerdotalism would cure the Germans of their reverence for it."

It was in pursuit of the same subject that Bismarck, one day at table, remarked to his guests: "We have already been asked whether we could give him (the Pope) an asylum. I have no objection to it—he might go to Cologne (Castle Brühl), or Fulda. It would be an unheard-of turn of things, but not so inexplicable after all; and it would be a great advantage for us to appear to the Catholics what we really are—the only Power at present able and willing to offer protection to the supreme head of their Church. Every pretext for the opposition of the Ultramontanes would then disappear—in Belgium and Bavaria. Besides, when people of strong imaginations, especially women, are in Rome, with the pomp and incense of Catholicism about them, and the Pope on his throne dispensing blessings, they feel inclined

to become Catholics. But in Germany, where they would have the Pope before their eyes as a nice, good old gentleman, in want of help, as one of the bishops, eating and drinking like the rest, taking his pinch, and even smoking his cigar, there would be no such danger."

A few months later (February 13th, 1871) Bismarck began to talk at table of a visit which he had just received from the French Cardinal Bonnechose, and said: "I think I shall yet be able to win the confidence of the Catholic Church. Nothing can be more absurd than to put me down as an enemy of the Holy Chair. To me the Pope is primarily a political figure, and I have an innate respect for all real power. A man who rules over the consciences of two hundred millions of souls is to me a great monarch, and I should not have the least hesitation in appealing for his mediation, and even his arbitration, in a suitable case of political emergency. My only *noli me tangere* is the European position of re-unified Germany, which of course should be regarded as the most precious jewel in the Papal treasury."

Talking about the dogma of infallibility which had been proclaimed at Rome simultaneously with the declaration of war at Paris, Bismarck remarked: "The worst of a Minister of Public Worship is that he never forgets his own particular creed, and therefore always remains a party man. I think I should therefore prefer a Jew for such a post." And on another occasion: "The Jews have still no true home, but are a sort of universal Europeans, or cosmopolitan nomads. Their fatherland is Zion."

M. Jules Favre frequently accepted Bismarck's invitations to dinner; but during his week's residence at Versailles, from October 30th to November 6th, M. Thiers, on the other hand, scorned to taste the hospitality of the Chancellor.

"Excellency," remarked the latter one day, "I envy you your perseverance and your power of work; but, while admiring, I cannot imitate you. For I must eat, and always at my accustomed times."

Bismarck ever showed a truly royal faculty of recognition. The Military Commission which accompanied Jules Favre to Versailles, to treat for an armistice, included the Comte Hérissou, *officier d'ordonnance*; and when they had been seated at the dinner-table of the Chancellor, the latter said:

"M. d'Hérissou, this is not the first time I have met you. Wait a moment! Yes; it was at Baden-Baden in the year 1866, on the staircase of the Villa Mesmer, where the King was staying. You were introduced to me by Princess Menschikoff."

"It was really so," wrote Count Hérissou, "and I eagerly joined the chorus of admiration which escaped from the company with such exclamations as 'What a memory! Wonderful! What an astonishing man! It's only he who can do such things!'"

The dialogue between Bismarck and Favre relative to the conclusion of peace was of a most dramatic kind, and showed that Bismarck could have recourse to artifice to gain his point. After an exchange of civilities, Favre said he "was come to resume the negotiations broken off at Ferrières,"; but Bismarck represented "that the position was no longer the

same ; and if you hold to your former principle—‘ Not an inch of our soil, not a stone of our fortresses ’—it is useless to discuss further. My time is precious, so is yours, and I don’t see why we should waste it. . . . Moreover, you have come too late. There, behind that door, is a delegate of the Emperor Napoleon III., and I am about to negotiate with him.”

On Favre these words produced an indescribable impression of consternation and fear. Bismarck saw at a glance the enormous advantage he had obtained, and, while fixing his eyes on the door (which probably was only a cupboard), said :

“ Why should I treat with you? Why give to your Republic an appearance of legality in signing a treaty with their representative? In reality, you are merely a band of rebels. Your Emperor, should he return, would have the right to shoot you down as traitors and rebels.”

“ But,” cried Favre, “ should he return, there will be civil war and anarchy.”

“ Are you quite so sure of that ? ” replied Bismarck. “ Besides, I do not see what harm that would do us Germans.”

“ Are you not afraid then, M. le Comte, of driving us to the last extremity? of embittering still more our resistance ? ”

“ Yes, indeed, your resistance,” said the Chancellor, in a loud tone. “ You are proud of your resistance. But let me tell you, M. le Ministre, that if General Trochu ” [Governor of Paris] “ were a German General, I would have him shot this very day. Listen well to my words! One has no right, in view of humanity, in



the face of God, and for the sake of miserable military glory, to sacrifice a city of more than two millions of souls to famine. The railways on all sides are cut off, and if we cannot restore them within two days, which is not at all certain, a hundred thousand will die daily. Talk no more of your resistance—it is a crime.”

The Chancellor then rose as if to leave, and put his hand on the handle of the door, behind which the delegate of Napoleon was supposed to be awaiting an interview.

Thereupon Favre sprang up, hastened to Bismarck, and called out imploringly : “ No ; do not ! Have all you ask, but do not impose on France, after all her misfortune, the shame of being obliged to endure a Bonaparte ! ”

On the two resuming their seats, Favre began to praise the advantages of the Republic, of impersonal government, which alone could bear hard or ignominious conditions without being overthrown, and which alone was in a condition to ensure to Germany the fulfilment of her treaties, etc.

Bismarck laughed.

“ Are you so certain,” he asked, “ that France is as Republican as you say ? ”

“ Completely so.”

“ I am not entirely of your opinion, M. le Ministre. Before we negotiated with you, we studied the spirit of France. Notwithstanding the war which has proved so unfortunate for you, and which was more forced upon Napoleon by the French nation than desired by him ;—notwithstanding the defeats of your armies, nothing would be easier, believe me, than to restore

the Empire. It might not please in Paris, but it would be accepted in the Provinces—a *plébiscite* would do the rest. No; the reason why we have not taken up Bonaparte is because it appeared to us more advantageous to treat with you. As to the alleged love of France for the Republic, it would have disappeared with wonderful rapidity. You have not been long in power. Wait a little. When you have governed men for several years, you, a Liberal, will be transformed into a Conservative. From a Republican you will become a Monarchist. Believe me, one cannot lead or bring to prosperity a great nation without the principle of authority—that is, the Monarchy.”

Favre having protested against these opinions, Bismarck added: “Look at me! How did I begin? I was a Liberal, but by virtue of thought and reflection, by the demonstration of facts, and by experience of mankind, I, who love my country and wish it to be great and prosperous—I am a Conservative.”

What between working on the fears of the Republican Favre by playing off against him a dummy delegate of the fallen Emperor, and dwelling on the superior merits of monarchy as a form of government, Bismarck had gained his point. Five minutes later the double principle of a cession of territory and a war indemnity was accepted; and then the Chancellor invited his visitor to join him at dinner.

Before entering on the discussion of the preliminaries for the surrender of Paris, Bismarck offered cigars to Jules Favre, which the latter declined with thanks, saying that he did not smoke.

"You are wrong," said Bismarck. "When you enter on a discussion which may lead to vehement remarks, you should smoke. When one smokes, the cigar is held between the fingers; one must handle it, not allow it to fall, and thereby violent movements of the body are avoided or weakened. With regard to the mental condition, it does not deprive us of our intellectual capacity, but it produces a state of kindly repose. The cigar is a diversion, and this blue smoke which rises in curves, and which the eye involuntarily follows, pleases and renders us more flexible. The eye is occupied; the hand is engaged; the organ of smell is gratified;—one is happy. In this state one is very disposed to make concessions; and our business—that of diplomatists—continually consists in the making of mutual concessions."

After deliberating on various questions, the topic was raised whether Garibaldi should be included in the armistice.

"No; I must have him," exclaimed Bismarck. "I want to exhibit him in Berlin with a placard on his back, inscribed, 'Italian gratitude!' After all we have done for these people, their conduct is really outrageous."

Favre strongly opposed the entry of the German army into Paris.

Bismarck replied that he himself would have given way here, but the King and the military people insisted on it. "This," he said, "is the reward of our army. When I return home and meet a poor cripple with a wooden leg, he will say, 'The leg I left before the walls of Paris entitled me to

complete my conquest. This diplomatist, who is in possession of all his limbs, prevented it.' We cannot expose ourselves on this point to violate public feeling."

On arriving at Frankfort to conclude the definitive treaty of peace between France and Germany, Bismarck wore plain clothes, so that the chief waiter of "The Swan" made bold to remark that he scarcely recognised his Highness again.

"*Ja, mein lieber,*" returns the Chancellor, "it was with the French just as it is with you—they only recognised us with our uniforms on."

Replying to the toast of his health, at a banquet given him by the city of Frankfort on the definitive conclusion of peace (May 10th, 1871), Bismarck said: "To me it has been a source of great pleasure to return to Frankfort, with which my life is already associated by so many ties of friendship, in connection with so memorable an occasion as the present. It is a beautiful coincidence that the first great political act of the resuscitated German Empire should have been performed in the ancient imperial and coronation city of Frankfort, and I cordially hope that the Peace of Frankfort may also bring peace *for* and *with* Frankfort"—an allusion to the annexation of the Free City to Prussia in 1866.

The final scene of the French War—the "curtain," so to speak, of the tremendous tragedy—was furnished by the triumphal entry of a representative contingent of the German army into Berlin. Preceded by his paladins—his Bismarck, his Roon, and his Moltke—the Emperor, at the head of the troops, rode all along

the Linden Avenue amid the enthusiastic acclamations of the populace. Halting in front of Blücher's statue, there were borne past him fifty-five captured French colours with their silken folds fluttering and rustling in the breeze created by the thundering cheers of the multitude. Bismarck, who, in passing through the Brandenburg Gate, had made a curt intimation to and received brief answer from the Emperor, sat upright but restless in his saddle behind his Majesty, looking around him as if in quest of something. An acquaintance, approaching him, asked what his Highness wanted. "Paper and pencil," was the reply ; and these articles were quickly procured from the pocketbook of a policeman. The Prince wrote off a hasty word or two on his thigh, and, holding the paper aloft, said, "Here is a telegram ; will you carry it ?" "Yes," replied the bystander thus addressed. "Thanks," said the Prince. "You can read it." Hurriedly passing through the crowd, the messenger read it in the quieter Behrenstrasse. "To the German Commander of the Outposts, Paris.—If the French outposts advance farther, attack them."

What a moment ! Close together lay the dice of peace and war. Here were the standards unfurled for the joyful march of peace, there was the drawn sword raised to strike. What had happened ? The French troops had pushed their outposts beyond the line agreed upon, and the German Commander (of the army of occupation left behind to ensure performance of the peace conditions) had asked whether he should hold on to his line, or whether he should make

way for the French movement. Being admirably acted on by Count Waldersee, the Military Attaché at Paris, into whose hands the telegram came, the war cloudlet vanished as quickly as it had risen, and in undimmed splendour the sun of peace again beamed over Europe.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *SALZBURG AND VARZIN.*

IN the autumn of 1871 the German and Austrian Emperors met at Salzburg to discuss their future relations in the light of the results of the French war, and the interview was preceded by a meeting at Gastein between their respective Chancellors, Bismarck and Beust.

"The three weeks I passed there," wrote the latter, "have left me the most pleasant recollections. We were both staying at Straubinger's Hotel, and saw each other daily. To those whom he likes Prince Bismarck is the most agreeable of companions. The originality of his ideas is only surpassed by that of his expression of them. He has a spontaneous, and therefore pleasing, *bonhomie* which mitigates the asperity of his judgment. One of his favourite sayings was, '*Er ist ein recht dummer Kerl*' (He is a very stupid fellow), without meaning any offence to the person to whom he referred.

"'What do you do when you are angry?' he once asked me; 'I suppose you do not get angry as often as I do.'

"'I get angry,' was my answer, 'with the stupidity of mankind, but not with its malignity.'

“‘Do you not find it a great relief,’ he asked, ‘to smash things when you are in a passion?’

“‘You may be thankful,’ said I, ‘that you are not in my place, or you would have smashed everything in the house.’

“‘One day I was over there,’ he said, pointing to the windows of the Emperor’s apartments opposite, ‘and I got into a violent rage. On leaving, I shut the door violently, and the key remained in my hand. I went to Lehndorf’s room, and threw the key into the basin, which broke into a thousand pieces. ‘What is the matter?’ he exclaimed; ‘are you ill?’ ‘I *was* ill,’ I replied; ‘but now I am quite well again.’

“He spoke a great deal of the French war and of his negotiations with Thiers and Jules Favre. ‘The truce was coming to an end,’ said Bismarck, ‘and I said to Thiers: “*Ecoutez, Monsieur Thiers, voilà une heure que je subis votre éloquence; il faut une fois en finir: je vous préviens que je ne parlerai plus français, je ne parlerai qu’allemand.*” “*Mais, Monsieur,*” answered Thiers, “*nous ne comprenons pas un mot d’allemand.*” “*C’est égal,*” I replied; “*je ne parlerai qu’allemand.*” Thiers then made a magnificent speech; I listened patiently, and answered in German. He and Favre went up and down the room, wringing their hands in despair for half-an-hour; at last they yielded and did exactly what I wanted. Upon this I at once spoke French again.’

“Another story was more to his credit. He was riding with the German troops to the review at Longchamps, when a man in a blouse came up to



him, exclaiming, '*Tu es une fameuse canaille.*' 'I might have had him imprisoned,' said Bismarck; 'but I was delighted with the man's courage.'

"Two other statements which he made to me about the war were very interesting. The first was that he had opposed the acquisition of Metz, because of the disaffection of its French inhabitants, and that he only yielded in consequence of the urgent demands of the military authorities, who said that it would make a difference of a hundred thousand men in time of peace. The other was that the siege of Paris would have had to be abandoned if Metz had held out another month.

"He told me of two remarkable facts of the past, farther back than 1866. In 1859, when he had just entered upon his post as Ambassador to Russia, he was asked his opinion on the eve of the Italian War, and instantly decided for energetic military action in favour of Austria, but with the condition that Austria consented to a re-organisation of the Confederation as Bismarck again demanded it before the war of 1866—viz., a re-partition of Germany, giving the north to Prussia, the south to Austria.

"Again, in 1864, after the peace with Denmark, Bismarck proposed that Schleswig and Holstein should be given to Prussia in exchange for a promise to aid Austria in a war against Italy for the recovery of Lombardy. I could scarcely believe this latter statement, because at the time it was made, and even before Bismarck became Minister, Prussia had acknowledged the kingdom of Italy, and Lombardy had been given over to France, so that Napoleon was

personally engaged. But a functionary of the Foreign Office, who was well initiated into these affairs, confirmed Bismarck's words.

"But not only Bismarck's retrospective disclosures were interesting; his prognostications of the future were not less so. Thus he saw the whole Kulturkampf in his mind's eye, and forecast it to me in all its details. 'They have acted villainously towards us in Rome,' he said—*ruchlos* being one of his favourite adjectives.

"Our conversation also touched upon the German provinces of Austria. Bismarck altogether denied that the plan of acquiring them for the German Empire had ever been entertained, saying that Vienna and the Slav, as well as the Catholic population, would only be an embarrassment and a burden. I do not doubt Bismarck's sincerity in this; but one thing I cannot forget. 'Much sooner,' added he, 'should we think of having Holland.' When I entered upon my post as Ambassador to London some months later, the new Dutch Minister, who had been Minister at Berlin, arrived at the same time. One of the first things he told me was that Bismarck, questioned by him on Germany's taste for the possession of Holland, comforted him with the words: 'We should sooner think of having the German provinces of Austria.'"

This story may be capped by another of the same kind.

One day when at Versailles, Lord Odo Russell went to call on Bismarck, but found that he was closeted with Count Harry Arnim. My lord had

not waited long before the Count came out, fanning himself with his handkerchief, and looking as if he were about to choke.

"Well," he exclaimed, "I cannot understand how Bismarck can bear that—smoking the strongest Havanas in a stuffy little room. I had to beg him to open the window."

Presently my lord entered the sanctum of the Chancellor, whom he found gasping for breath almost at the open window.

"What strange tastes some people have!" remarked the Prince, after exchanging compliments with the British envoy. "Arnim has just been with me, and he was so overpoweringly perfumed that I could stand it no longer, and had to open the window."

Well may good my lord have asked, on afterwards relating the story, "What is historical truth?"

One of the visitors to Gastein, at the time of the meeting there between Beust and Bismarck, was Herr Christ, who was married to a niece of Archduke John's widow, Countess of Meran. This Herr Christ was a wealthy Frankfort banker, who spent his money freely, and with whom Bismarck had been intimately connected when he was Ambassador to the Bundestag. Herr Christ gave a dinner in honour of Bismarck, and invited Beust and several other Austrians besides. Towards the end of dinner Herr Christ addressed to Bismarck the following words, spoken in pure Frankfort dialect: "Oh, but tell me, why didn't you go to Vienna in 1866?" Bismarck grumbled something under his moustache, but Herr Christ, undaunted, went on: "Oh, but didn't you

often and often tell us in Frankfort that it would be the happiest day in your life when you proudly rode into Vienna?" The tableau which followed these words is more easily imagined than described.

"I had the honour," wrote Beust, "of giving my princely colleague a dinner at the so-called 'Schweizer-Hütte, at which Sektionschef von Hofmann, Herr von Keudell, and Herr von Abeken were also present. The two latter had accompanied Bismarck to Gastein. The dinner was served in a building somewhat similar to the 'Gloriette' near Schönbrunn, on an eminence commanding an extensive view. Suddenly we perceived a private carriage on the road; it contained Count Arnim, who had recently been appointed Ambassador in Paris. I sent a messenger to invite the Count to dine with us. The carriage stopped, but its occupant was not visible. At last we discovered that he had alighted, and was changing his clothes behind the carriage, although we were in morning dress. 'That is the sort of man,' said Bismarck, 'with whom I have to settle questions of high State policy!' This remark, and the subsequent conversation at dinner, showed that already at that time Bismarck and Arnim were not on good terms."

The trouble with Count Harry Arnim began when this diplomatist—"Der Affe," or "Ape," as he was nicknamed by his familiars—said to Countess Von Redern, at one of the Empress Augusta's private parties, that he had hitherto been trying to walk on his feet in Paris, but that from "his latest instructions he gathered that he was expected until further notice

to walk on his hands." The saying was reported to Bismarck and made "his three hairs bristle." "The 'Ape' has only been employed because we thought him quadrumanous," he exclaimed.

During the siege of Paris, Bismarck pronounced Arnim to have a good head, but complained that there was no relying on his reports, which often presented two wholly different views on the same day. "When I was at Varzin," he said, "and had to read his despatches from Rome, his opinion about people there changed twice every other week, according as he had been well or ill treated. Indeed, he changed with every post, and frequently had different views in the same letter."

Talking with a deputy (Dr. Schwarze) about the Arnim case (1874) Bismarck remarked, "My diplomatists must all wheel like soldiers at the word of command." The Chancellor but expressed the same thing differently when he afterwards said that whenever any new individual force sprang up near him, his tendency was to assimilate or annihilate it—make it subservient to himself or suppress it altogether—*se soumettre ou se démettre*.

It was for thus objecting to be "assimilated," to subordinate himself in all things to the will of his chief, that the "Ape" had to be annihilated several years later when he had repeatedly refused to wheel like a soldier at the Chancellor's word of command. The main cause of difference between the two was the question of the future form of government in France. Curiously enough Bismarck, the monarchist, was all in favour of a Republic, while Arnim thought it

would best suit the interests of Germany to encourage the notion of a return at Paris to a monarchical *régime*. Arnim affected to see in the democratic legislature of France a real danger to the semi-despotisms of neighbouring Sovereigns, while Bismarck argued that the Republican form of government was the saucepan, so to speak, in which France might best be made to stew in her own juice ; and above all things he foresaw that, as long as France remained Republican, she would have little chance of being able to enter into an anti-German alliance with any of the military monarchies.\*

"My opinion," wrote Count Arnim, in May 1872, "is that we ought not to repel the addresses of the Bonapartists."

"A monarchical France," replied the Prince, in December of the same year, "would meanwhile be more perilous to us than the contagious influence of Republican institutions, the spectacle offered by these being more deterrent than otherwise ; wherefore you are to regard my instructions on this head as unconditional, and to refrain from saying or doing anything in an opposite sense."

Nevertheless, Arnim continued to intrigue for the return to a Monarchy in France, with the result that he had to be abolished by his chief. In the whole course of his career, Bismarck never displayed greater foresight and wisdom than when he declared himself in favour of a Republic in France. Had the "*Affe*" been allowed to have his way, it is pretty certain that

\* Compare this with Bismarck's conversation on the same subject with Jules Favre, p. 202.

peace between France and Germany would not have remained unbroken so long. A Clerical Monarchy in France, as Bismarck once remarked, would indubitably have meant war.

But to return to the Gastein-Salzburg interview of 1871, where Arnim had made such an exhibition of his vanity.

Before parting, Bismarck and Beust took a long drive to Klesheim. "I remained, of course, perfectly passive to the cheers of the people," wrote Beust, "leaving the honour entirely to the illustrious visitor, who acknowledged them with unusual cordiality by military salutes. He said to me: 'I have arranged things very well. In the days when people used to hiss me, I wore civilian clothes, and had no occasion to take off my hat; while now, when they cheer me, I wear a uniform, and need only touch my head.' "\*

Soon after the Salzburg meeting, the *rapprochement* between Germany and Austria necessitated the retirement from office of Count Beust, in favour of Count Andrassy, a more sincere friend of the new order of things; and between Bismarck and Beust there was

\* "On leaving," wrote Beust, "the Emperor William said to me, 'I have rather blackened you.' He meant that he had invested me with the order of the Black Eagle, and I am certain that his Majesty did not blacken me in any other sense, but that other people did so especially during the time of my embassy in Paris. When I returned to Vienna, an old-fashioned Austrian said to me: 'Do not let the Prussians be whitewashed in your opinion.' 'On the contrary' said I, 'I have let them blacken me.' On this subject I invented the following charade: '*Qu'est-ce que c'est? Autrefois je l'étais, aujourd'hui je l'ai? La bête noire.*' "

no further communication till the spring of 1878, when the Prince, referring to his new fellow-Chancellor at Vienna (Andrassy), said in the Reichstag : " He is as sure of my telling him the truth as I am of his doing so too. But in former times it was otherwise. For at the old Diet" [in Frankfort] " I have had Austrian colleagues to whom I said, ' It is a matter of perfect indifference to me whether you speak or whether the wind whistles down the chimney, for I don't believe a word you say.' "

Suspecting that these words might have been meant to refer to him, Beust—who was now Ambassador in London—wrote to Bismarck : " YOUR SERENE HIGHNESS,—Allow me to enclose an *Alpenblume*, in remembrance of our last meeting at Gastein." This *Alpenblume* consisted of a sonnet—for Beust was a deft hand at the turning of a verse—containing some very pretty and flattering conceits about the whistling of the wind in the German Chancellor's chimney.

But the latter, in acknowledging the sonnet—which he described as very witty—explained that, in speaking as he did, he had merely referred to Count Prokesch, with whom, when at Frankfort, he had frequently " indulged in altercations exceeding the limits of diplomatic speech." For the rest, it was pleasant for him (the Prince) to reflect that the suspicion of his having had a man of intellect (like Beust) in his mind's eye had drawn down upon him no sterner punishment than " an amiable reminder of Gastein and a posy of elegant verses."

In the autumn (1872) following on the meeting of the Austrian and German Emperors and their



respective Chancellors at Gastein and Salzburg, Bismarck celebrated his silver wedding at Varzin, his guests including his dear old Göttingen friend and fellow-student, John Lothrop Motley.

"I asked him (Bismarck)," wrote Motley, "if he was good friends with the Emperor of Austria. He said 'yes,' that the Emperor was exceedingly civil to him last year at Salzburg, and crossed the room to speak to him as soon as he appeared at the door."

Bismarck, in fact, was now beginning to reap the fruit of the moderation which he had shown towards Austria in 1866. In the same letter Motley wrote: "The military opinion was bent on going to Vienna, after Sadowa. Bismarck strongly opposed this idea. He said it was absolutely necessary not to humiliate Austria, to do nothing that would make friendly relations with her in the future impossible. He said many people refused to speak to him. The events have entirely justified Bismarck's course, as all now agree. It would have been easy enough to go to Vienna or to Hungary, but to return would have been full of danger."

Touching his other conversations with the Chancellor, Motley wrote:

"After dinner Bismarck and I had a long walk in the woods, he talking all the time in the simplest and funniest and most interesting manner about all sorts of things that had happened in these tremendous years, but talking of them exactly as everyday people talk of everyday matters—without any affectation. The truth is, he is so entirely simple, so full of *laissez-aller*, that one is obliged to be saying to

oneself all the time, 'This is the great Bismarck—the greatest living man, and one of the greatest historical characters that ever lived.' When one lives familiarly with Brobdignags it seems for the moment that everybody is a Brobdignag too, that it is the regular thing to be; one forgets for the moment one's own comparatively diminutive stature. There are a great many men in certain villages that we have known, who cast a far more chilling shade over those about them than Bismarck does.

"If he had learned nothing else, he said, he had learned modesty. Certainly a more unaffected mortal never breathed, nor a more genial one. He looks like a Colossus, but his health is somewhat shattered. He can never sleep till four or five in the morning. He smokes very little now—only light tobacco in a pipe. When I last knew him he never stopped smoking the strongest cigars. Now, he tells me, he couldn't to save his life smoke a single cigar. He has a disgust for them. . . . While he is sitting there and talking to all of us, his secretary hands him the piles of letters with which he is goaded in his retirement, and with a lead pencil about a foot long makes memoranda as to the answers and other dispositions to be made. Meanwhile the boys are playing billiards in another part of the same room, and a big black dog, called 'Sultan,' is rampaging generally through the apartment and joining in everybody's conversation.

"After breakfast Bismarck and I always took a long walk, during which he was always talking—generally about the events of the French War.

He talks away right and left about everything and anything—says, among other things, that nothing could be a greater *bêtise* than for Germany to attack any foreign country—that if Russia were to offer the Baltic provinces as a gift, he would not accept them. As to Holland, it would be mere insanity to pretend to occupy or invade its independence. It had never occurred to him or to anybody. As to Belgium, France would have made any terms, at any time with Germany, if allowed to take Belgium.

“I wish I could record the description he gave of his interviews with Jules Favre and afterwards with Thiers and Favre, when the peace was made. One trait I mustn't forget, however. Favre cried, or affected to cry, and was very pathetic and heroic. Bismarck said that he must not harangue him, as if he were an Assembly; they were two together on business purposes, and he was perfectly hardened against eloquence of any kind. Favre begged him not to mention that he had been so weak as to weep, and Bismarck was much diverted at finding in the printed account afterwards published by Favre that he made a great parade of the tears he had shed. . . . Without giving you, however, a *cours d'histoire contemporaine*, I could hardly undertake to give you much of his conversation. . . . He does not dislike Louis Napoleon, and said that he had long been of opinion that his heart was much better, and his head less powerful, than the world was inclined to believe.”

On January 9th, in the following year (1873), Bismarck was sitting at dinner, his guests including a German merchant from Melbourne. Towards the

end of the meal, a telegram was brought in to the Chancellor. It was from the Ambassador, Count Bernstorff, in London, announcing the death of Napoleon that same morning at Chislehurst. On reading the telegram, the Prince said to his wife: "I told you he would never survive the operation. Napoleon died this morning." Then, turning to the messenger who had brought the despatch: "Has His Majesty also received a telegram? No? Well, then, take this at once to the Emperor."

Thereupon the Princess said, "Otto, you'll go into mourning, won't you?" Bismarck replied by saying that Napoleon was a good man but a weak one, and that he never forgot a good action. Once only he had played him false, and that was when he (Bismarck) was marching on Vienna after Königgrätz, and Napoleon telegraphed to say that if the Prussians advanced any farther, he would at once take the field. He (the Chancellor) had never forgotten that, and had paid him back for it.

Among other guests of the Chancellor at Varzin in the year of his silver wedding, was Professor Karl Aegidi, chief of the Press Department of the Foreign office—in fact, the Prince's journalistic secretary. The position of Professor Aegidi required that he should have a very exact knowledge of his chief's political intentions and aims. He saw the Prince daily, and was at liberty to go to him at all times. Bismarck required very much of him, but was "an ideal superior." He always, he said, acted like a gentleman to him. Aegidi, indeed, had the title and held the office of a Reporting Counsellor, though it was generally not he,

but Bismarck, who reported to the Sovereign. Bismarck's orders for the Press were always so pregnantly worded that if Aegidi had used his precise expressions, everybody would have seen that the article emanated from the Chancellor himself. The Professor confessed that it was often no easy task to clothe his thoughts in less strikingly characteristic language. When the Prince gave such instructions for the *Norddeutsche* that Aegidi expected no good effect to accrue, he took the precaution to lay the article before the Prince in rough proof. It sometimes happened that the Chancellor cancelled it or tore it up.

One evening the Prince ordered Aegidi five times to read certain documents that lay before him, and to draw up Memorials founded on them. Aegidi got the documents, and worked till half-past two in the morning. The Memorials he drew up were copied, and Aegidi agreed that the clerk should lay his copies on the Prince's table as early as possible. Aegidi expected to be summoned to the Prince about noon. He was summoned, indeed, but not a word was said about the Memorials. At ten in the evening the Prince sent for him again, but said nothing about the Memorials, and when Aegidi asked about them, he replied, "They lie buried under this avalanche of manuscripts." When Aegidi went to the Foreign Office next morning, the Chancellor had worked through the whole heap of documents in the night, and the five Memorials, all of them voluminous, lay on Aegidi's table corrected and revised to the last.

Aegidi had first made the Chancellor's acquaintance when, as a Professor at Bonn, he took the field in charge of a voluntary ambulance-column during the French War, and the Prince, with the keen eye for a man to serve his purpose which ever distinguished him, was quick to perceive in the Bonn Professor the very person he wanted for his Press purposes.

"May I ask your Serene Highness a question?" said Aegidi one day, two years later, at Varzin, whither he had been invited by his chief to get the taste of his *communiqués* to the *North German Gasette* washed out of his mouth.

"Certainly, my dear Professor."

"Well, then, how was it that you were so very effusive in your thanks at Tronville, on the morning after Mars-la-Tour, when I directed you where to find General von Voigts-Rhetz?"

"Oh, that is very simple," replied the Chancellor; "late on the previous night I had heard that my son Herbert had fallen in a cavalry charge at Mars-la-Tour, and that Bill (his brother) had also been wounded. My first thought, of course, was to ride off in search of them, and I knew that Voigts-Rhetz could probably tell me where the 1st Dragoon Guards were lying. I found him, as you directed, quartered with the Knights of St. John at the other end of the village, and was then conducted to the bivouac of the regiment, where I soon discovered Bill to be well and hearty, but that Herbert had been wounded by a bullet through the thigh, though, thank God! not dangerously. Just fancy," continued the Chancellor,

turning to his wife, "if I had telegraphed to you, 'Herbert fallen in battle.'"<sup>\*</sup>

"Then I should never have forgiven you for beginning the war," replied the Princess, who thus added an interesting bit of historical evidence to the confessions of the Chancellor already quoted at the beginning of the last chapter.

One day, in the course of a drive, Bismarck stopped the carriage at a fox's hole, and explained to Aegidi its whole structure.

"Look!" he then said. "Do you see these partridges getting up? There they go, and there they alight again. They want to make us believe that they are going farther in the same direction. But it won't do. They are only deceiving us, and presently they will take the very opposite direction."

Another time, in the course of a walk, they passed a stork's nest, where two male birds seemed to be having an altercation in presence of a female one. "Ah," said the Chancellor to Aegidi, who was following the incident with close attention, "I see that you are fond of French novels, otherwise you would not take such a deep interest in the divorce affair which is going on up yonder."

<sup>\*</sup> Talking afterwards to some friends at Friedrichsruh, Bismarck remarked that it was little short of a miracle how the life of his eldest son, Count Herbert, had been saved at Mars-la-Tour. This had been done by a large watch which he (the Chancellor) had presented to him. A French bullet would have gone straight through his son's heart had its flight not been stopped by this chronometer, which still marked the very second when the shot had struck, and was thus valuable as determining the exact time of the famous cavalry charge.

At this time the Chancellor's organ, the *North German Gazette*, was bringing out serially the translation of a story from the pen of an English writer, and the talk came to be of how the thing would end.

"That I can soon tell you," said the Prince, turning to his wife. And after he had forecast the plot of the story to its close, Aegidi, who had read it in the original, remarked: "Quite right. But your Excellency must have read the English version?"

"Not a bit of it," replied the Chancellor, who had merely divined the writer's drift from the first two or three chapters, and constructed the rest of the plot, on this foundation, out of his own head.

One day he entered his family circle and complained of being tired. "Till seven o'clock this morning," he said, "I was unable to close my eyes—and all on account of Portugal. They have overturned a Cabinet at Lisbon, and I could not sleep for thinking about its successor. Again and again I turned over in my mind all the elements that could go to the making of a new Ministry, but I could not get the subject out of my head"—saying which he proceeded to talk about the leading men of Portugal with a fulness of knowledge almost incredible.

On another occasion Aegidi ventured to express his astonishment at the Chancellor's attainments in all the principal fields of human knowledge. "Oh, that is very simple," replied the Prince. "At the time when I was living in the country and had nothing else to do, there was a large general library in the house, and I literally devoured it."



So much for Aegidi. But at a later time the Chancellor, speaking of his early reading, remarked to another friend: "In my time Hegel was taught at all the Universities, but I learned of him only as much as I wanted for the examination, and I am not conscious of having received from him any impression on my inner man. I gradually became a lawyer at the beer-table and on the fencing-floor, and a life of contemplation in the midst of nature influenced me more than the philosophers."

In answer to the question whether Spinoza's Pantheism had influenced him, the Prince answered, "Yes, but Christianity in a much higher degree; indeed, in the highest degree." He added, "I could not get quite through Kant. What he says of Morality, especially of 'The Categorical Imperative,' is very fine, but I prefer to live without the feeling of the Imperative. I have never lived on principles. When I have had to act, I never first asked myself on what principles I was going to act, but I went at it, and did what I thought good. I have often been reproached for want of principles. In my youth I often talked with a lady cousin of mine, who had a tincture of philosophy, and who wanted to play the aunt with me about the question whether I must adopt principles or not. At last I put an end to further dispute by remarking, 'If I am to go through life with principles, it seems to me just the same as if I had to pass along a narrow forest path with a long pole in my mouth.'"

## CHAPTER IX.

### *REICHSKANZLER.*

CONVERSING (in June 1871) with the Burgomaster of Worms, who had come to Berlin to present him with the freedom of that ancient city, the Chancellor said :

“Considering the nature of the French attack on us, I never thought that we should prove so quick with them as we did, and that was why I insisted on the cession of Metz. I asked the members of the General Staff what they thought of Metz. ‘There can be no question at all about it,’ was their answer. ‘Metz is worth an army of 120,000 men, Belfort of 8000.’ Of these two places we wanted one, and of course we retained Metz. This fortress can detain a large army, while Belfort could be left behind. For the rest, the French Lorrainers are not half so bad as they are painted. Those who are good haters can also be good lovers. The very first night I slept in France—and I remember, by the way, that I had a tame but very tough rabbit for supper—my host said to me, ‘It is all the same who takes us, Russians or Prussians; but we prefer those to whom we pay fewest taxes.’ I replied that he would have to pay less to us than to France—though how long

this would last I couldn't say. 'But how, then, about the army?' asked the man. I said that with us every one must become a soldier—the son of the Prefect as well as of the poorest man; I and my sons, for example, had had to serve. Upon which my Lorraine friend declared himself satisfied."

A little later there came to Berlin a deputation of notables from the Reichsland to set forth their wishes respecting it. After dinner, the Chancellor took one of these notables, Count Dürckheim, aside, and began to talk to him in the most confidential manner about the future of the conquered provinces.

"You will have a Fatherland," said the Prince, "which will belong to the Empire and to no other. Your Sovereign will be Kaiser William, the ruler of the whole Reich."

Count Dürckheim observed that there had been some talk of appointing a German Prince as Regent over Alsace-Lorraine.

"Oh, no," put in the Chancellor briskly. "I won't have anything of that kind. Princes are of no use for such a purpose. What we want in Alsace are people who will work—none of your Princes and Court functionaries. *Il n'y aurait, du reste, chez vous ni agréments ni distractions pour un prince, et, vous le savez, les princes aiment à s'amuser.*"

On another occasion, at one of the Chancellor's evening receptions, Count Dürckheim, in taking leave of his host towards midnight, once more commended Alsace to his tender consideration. With an air of deep emotion, Bismarck embraced the Count before the whole company and said: "Have no fear. Your

native province will never be treated in a step-motherly fashion."

Some few years later Bismarck went up to a group of Alsatian deputies with a foaming mug of beer in his hand, and said :

" Well, and how do you Alsations like Germany ? "

" Your Highness," answered one of them—Schneegans (Snowgoose) by name—" we have made of it a marriage of reason, and sometimes that is the best kind of wedlock."

The Prince gave a laugh.

" Yes," he said. " Love and mutual respect between a couple often come from their living together. Let us drink to that—*prosit* ! "

Yet in the spring of 1878, when it had become necessary to settle once and for all the future form of Government in the conquered provinces, Bismarck—in spite of his previously expressed aversion to Princes as *rois fainéants*—strongly favoured the idea of appointing the Crown Prince as a kind of Regent. " I should like," he said, " to make of Alsace-Lorraine a kind of German Dauphiné, in which the Crown Prince for the time being might have an opportunity of familiarising himself with affairs, and thus fitting himself all the better for the performance of his duties when he comes to the throne."

Soon after this, however, two Socialist attempts (by Hödel and Nobiling) were made on the life of the old Emperor ; and as his Majesty thenceforth wished to have the Crown Prince ever near his person, the project of sending him to the Reichsland fell through, Field-Marshal von Manteuffel being appointed Statthalter.

Referring a few years later to the state of parties in the Reichsland, the Chancellor said :

"To rule with the help of one's enemies is ever the worst kind of policy, wherefore I condemn every government which is more complaisant to the wishes of its opponents—in this case the Protesters—than to those of their own supporters (the Autonomists) in the hope of thus being able to win over these opponents."

Bismarck might very well have added, with reference to Mr. Gladstone's policy towards the Irish, "*Nomine mutato narratur fabula de te.*"

The North-Schleswigers, who had been annexed to Prussia in 1866, were pretty much in the same predicament as the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine. A clause in the Treaty of Prague, inserted at the instance of Napoleon, had stipulated a *plébiscite* for the people of North Schleswig, after a certain experience of their Prussian rulers, to determine whether they would content themselves with their new masters or resume their allegiance to Denmark. But this stipulation had never been carried out, in spite of the fact that a North Schleswig deputy (Krüger, of Hadersleben) had repeatedly urged upon Bismarck the justice of doing so.

"I am sorry," said the Chancellor, at one of his *soirées* (in 1873). "Personally, nothing would give me greater pleasure. But you must remember that there are forty millions of Germans behind me, whose opinions on the subject I am bound to respect as well as yours, and they will not hear of such a thing. Believe me, however, when I say that the more

energetically you stand up for your cause in the Reichstag, the more I shall respect you."

It was in this way that Bismarck dealt with the "national aspirations" of the Alsatians, the Poles, and the North Schleswigers.

A few years later (1878), the clause in the Treaty of Prague relating to North Schleswig was abrogated altogether by mutual consent of Prussia and Austria; and it was soon after this that Bismarck, in conversation with a clerical deputy, Baron von Franckenstein—made an interesting revelation with regard to the war of 1866, which had resulted, among other things, in Prussia's annexation of Schleswig-Holstein.

After the first shots had already been exchanged in 1866, he had, he said, offered to the Emperor Francis Joseph, through the brother of General von Gablenz, to come to terms. The Emperor had not been averse from considering the proposal, but the Austrian Minister, Count Larisch, had protested that it would never do, saying that, in five weeks' time, either the Austrian troops would be in Berlin—in which case there would be plenty of money—or that the war would go against Austria, when she would again have cause to declare herself bankrupt. Count Mensdorff and the other Ministers agreed with Count Larisch, and then the war went on, resulting as it did.

The ambition, he further remarked, which had been imputed to him of making further conquests for Germany was one of those silly things that were always being said of him. What sort of conquests were they to be? Denmark, Holland, Belgium, or even Austria as far as the Leitha, with Vienna as a new provincial

city? Any Prussian Minister who ever thought of such a thing would only prove his fitness for a lunatic asylum. Germany and Austria, united, formed the best pledge for the peace of Europe. He had always thought so, and always would think so. It was for this reason that, in 1866, he had not taken a single inch of Austrian soil, as thus he would have sown the seeds of a long estrangement; whereas close co-operation between the two States was now (in 1879) conceivable and possible. That the relations between the Courts of Berlin and St. Petersburg were more intimate than between the Courts of Berlin and Vienna was simply due to the closer family connections between the Russian and the German dynasties. Austria and Germany together would be able to cope with every enemy, whether France or Russia. He had expressed himself in this sense to Kaiser Franz Joseph, the first time he met him after 1866.\*

This was in 1872, when the three Emperors (of Germany, Russia, and Austria) met at Berlin, and entered into the informal *Drei-Kaiser-Bund* against the growing forces of international anarchy.

On this subject Bismarck said, twenty years later: "I enjoyed the confidence of Alexander II. to the end of his life, to an unlimited degree. It was this that brought Russia together for years with the two other Empires—Germany and Austria-Hungary—to the 'Three Emperors' Alliance.' I succeeded in showing the three Sovereigns every time they met that they had infinitely more in common to defend in the

\* Compare pp. 101, 116, 351.

interest of 'monarchy against revolution' than they would gain by individual conquests if separated."

In the spring (April 1873) following the meeting of the three Emperors at Berlin, Bismarck accompanied the Emperor to St. Petersburg, where he said, "I should regard myself as a traitor if ever I were to entertain any hostile plan against Russia and her Emperor."

In connection with this subject some one expressed a fear as to the political convictions of the Tsarevitch (afterwards Alexander III.), but Bismarck sought to tranquillise him by explaining that it was rather the rule than otherwise for heirs-apparent to join the Opposition, but that they came to see things in a very different light on succeeding to the throne.

It was about this time that the National Liberal Herr Lasker—"that little lisping Jew," as Bismarck once called him—had delivered himself in the Prussian Chamber of one of his fulminations against the railway speculators who had been the product of the "Gründer-Era"—a speech which ultimately led to the resignation of Count Itzenplitz, Minister of Commerce, and which also contained a violent attack on Bismarck's right-hand man, Herr Wagener, ex-editor of the *Kreuz-Zeitung*. Soon after this Bismarck gave a parliamentary dinner—Lasker himself being one of his guests; and the Chancellor made no secret of the fact that he had not been particularly edified by his philippic.

"But, your Serene Highness," pleaded Lasker, "not one single word of my attack was aimed at you."

"Perhaps not," returned the Chancellor, with a grim



smile ; "but your shot only missed my head by a hair's breadth."

On another occasion Bismarck described Lasker, in the hearing of the Crown Prince, as a "good soldier but a bad General."

On the same occasion mention was made of an anecdote referring to the French Minister of Finance, Pouyer-Quertier, and his strange experience of Prussian railways. This statesman—so ran the story—had come to Berlin to treat for the evacuation of the six departments round Paris, and at a dinner given in his honour by the Chancellor after the signature of the agreement, he had expressed his surprise at having had to pay a thousand francs for the single-fare conveyance of a special French railway carriage from Aix-la-Chapelle to Berlin. On the homeward journey, however, he found that the railway officials had meanwhile been ordered to treat him as if the thousand francs were meant to include the return-fare as well, while at all the chief stations sumptuous repasts, served by liveried attendants, were awaiting him—for thus had Bismarck contrived to counteract the bad impression which had been produced on the French statesman's mind by the extortionate tariff of the Prussian lines.

The Chancellor laughed heartily at the story, but declared it to have been applied to the wrong person. It was not to Pouyer-Quertier, he explained, but to Prince Gortchakoff that something of the same kind had happened. In the course of his repeated journeys in Prussia the Russian Chancellor had been asked to pay such immense sums in the shape of special fares

that he at last complained about it in Berlin ; and ever after that his railway journeys in Prussia had been facilitated by the providing of lunches and dinners for him here and there, and by a reduction of the passenger tariff in his favour.

Of Pouyer-Quertier personally Bismarck entertained a very high opinion, and when his name again came up some time later, in connection with the payment of the war-indemnity, the Chancellor remarked that he had at first demanded no less than ten milliards, but that at last he had gone down to five, which, with interest, requisitions, keep of the troops of occupation in France, etc., came to a total of about six milliards. He had summoned from Germany to Versailles two bankers—Herr von Bleichröder and Baron Erlanger—whom he sent into Paris, though they were both mortally afraid they would never come back alive. Baron Erlanger asked Bismarck how he could ever have thought of demanding such an enormous sum, which never could possibly be paid. The Chancellor replied that Jules Favre had regarded his demand with equal amazement, saying that if any one at the birth of Christ had begun to count such a sum, he would not yet have completed the work.

"Well," rejoined Bismarck, "that is precisely why I have summoned to my side some one who began to count even before the birth of Christ."

Both Bleichröder and Erlanger were Jews.

And with regard to the Jews, the Chancellor's private conversation, as became a man in his high official position, was always of a very guarded kind. It was only when the anti-Semitic agitation reached a

head, in 1881, that he spoke out. At a family dinner at Varzin, where one of the brothers Behrend, tenants of Bismarck's two paper-mills, was present, an incidental remark by his guest gave the Chancellor an opportunity of explaining his attitude towards the Jewish question. He entered into the most careful details, and shed a strong light on characteristic phases of the *Judenhetze*. Among other things, replying to the question whether he perfectly agreed with the anti-Semitic movement :

"Nothing can be more unfair. I condemn very decidedly the crusade against the Jews, whether on the ground of religion or of race. One might with equal right propose to assail Germans of Polish or French extraction on the ground that they were not Germans. That Jews should prefer to follow a commercial pursuit is simply a matter of taste. It may, indeed, be founded on their exclusion from other callings, but it is certainly no justification to make their greater affluence a ground for those inflammatory remarks which I find so very objectionable, because they provoke the envy and malevolence of the masses. I will never agree to Jews being denied any of the rights which constitutionally are theirs. The mental organisation of the Jews inclines them to criticism, and so one generally finds them in the Opposition. I make no distinction, however, between Christian and Jewish opponents to the principles of economic policy which, according to my convictions, I contend for as being useful to my country. When I have replied to addresses and telegrams expressing acquiescence in my opinions, I discharge a duty of courtesy,

as I said to Richter. I would have given equally courteous answers to similar words from the Progressive party, only I never receive any."

Referring to this expression of opinion about the Jews three years later, the Chancellor said: "I might perhaps still add that, in their polemical attitude towards me, the Jews have never behaved so disgracefully as my Christian opponents in the Progressist party, as well as some of the Conservatives during the time of the *Reichsglocke*" ("Bell of the Empire—a print which had been founded, for the apparent purpose of calumniating the Prince, by the adherents of Count Harry Arnim and other foes). "Still, I could understand the thing better if, for 'Jews,' were substituted 'Press-Jews.'"

As a matter of fact Bismarck looked upon the anti-Semitic movement, not so much as unjustifiable as inopportune, and therefore "undesirable." More than once he complained bitterly to his friends about the crying ingratitude of the Jews, who owed their emancipation throughout Germany mainly to him, yet lost no opportunity, both in Parliament and the Press, of attacking him and his policy.

"Those of them," he once said, "who possess anything, pay their taxes, write no democratic articles, and do not take to the barricades. It is the others who do this. The Jews do all they can to make an anti-Semite of me."\*

\* It was only when he became German Chancellor that Bismarck—who always boasted himself above all things to be a statesman of expediency—ceased to resist the emancipation of the Jews. In the first Prussian Parliament (1847) he had

But, with all their faults, the usurious Jews were regarded by Bismarck as less inimical to the peace and prosperity of the Fatherland than the intriguing Jesuits; and with the latter he plunged into the Kulturkampf almost immediately after the termination of the war with France.

To the various fractions in the Reichstag a Clerical, or Centre, party was now added; and one of the founders of this party was a personal enemy of the Prince, Herr von Savigny, to whom he thus referred at one of his parliamentary *soirées* (March 1877):

"Savigny wanted to be Chancellor, and, what is more, there was at first some idea of giving him the post. But the proceedings of the Constituent Reichstag (in 1867) made it clear to me that the Prussian Premier and Federal Chancellor must be one and the

voted against every new privilege demanded for them, and in so doing gloried in being denounced as "the narrow-minded, mediæval spirit in the flesh." He was no enemy, he said, of the Jews as men; to a certain extent he even liked them. But the very idea of his having to obey a Jew as representing the sacred person of His Majesty filled him with pain and abasement, nor was he ashamed to say that he shared this feeling with the lowest classes of the people. There was every reason to believe that the *Judenhetze*, or Jew-baiting mania which originated at Berlin and swept over the Empire in 1880-81, was partly persisted in under the popular conviction that the Chancellor, true to the political principles of his youth, still secretly sympathised with the movement. Interpellated on the subject, the Prussian Government curtly replied that it had no intention of altering existing legislation as to the Jews; and, in the Reichstag, Bismarck sought to repel the insinuation that he privately encouraged Anti-Semitic Societies, remarking that he had kept aloof, as enjoined by his official position, from a movement which was to him "undesirable."

same person. Therefore I wrote to him that he must either assume both offices or leave me the latter. I also offered to make him Vice-Chancellor—the same as Delbrück afterwards became. This would have landed me in a pretty pickle, but Heaven saved me from it. Savigny never answered my letter, ceased to greet me in the street, and became my enemy.”

Soon after the Peace of Nicolsburg, which led to the creation of the North German Confederation, Bismarck remarked that he had just the proper blend of blood for the post of North German Chancellor, seeing that, on the father's side, he was descended from a long line of Prussian noblemen, while through his mother he was connected with a famous family of Leipzig scholars.\*

With regard to the Kulturkampf, which Savigny had helped to bring about from feelings of personal animosity against Bismarck, the latter said: “The struggle is purely political, and not one between a

\* Bismarck's mother—Louise Wilhelmina Menken—was the only commoner who had ever married into the family. But if she did not bring the Bismarcks blood, she brought them brains. For it is not to be doubted that the Chancellor inherited much of his intellectual capacity from his mother. She was the daughter of a Geheimrath, or Privy Councillor, who (curiously enough) had helped Frederick the Great to manage his foreign affairs. He was descended from a merchant-patrician family of Oldenburg, which had contributed to the Fatherland several learned professors (at Leipzig and elsewhere), a poet “Philander von der Linde,” an historiographer to August the Strong, and the founder of the first magazine of the learned in Germany—*Acta Eruditorum*. (See “Prince Bismarck” in the “Statesmen Series” of Biographies: W. H. Allen and Co.)

Protestant dynasty and the Catholic Church ; it is not one between faith and unbelief, it is only the reappearance of the conflict—older than the advent of the Redeemer of the world, as old as the human race itself ; the same contest for power as Agamemnon waged with his seers at Aulis, and which cost him his daughter while preventing the Greeks from setting sail for Troy ; the conflict which raged all through the Middle Ages between the Pope and the Kaisers, till the Empire was ruined, and the last representative of Swabian dynasty perished on the scaffold under the axe of a French conqueror in alliance with Rome.”

The Chancellor once remarked to a couple of Clerical guests that he was by no means the first member of his family who had come into collision with the Roman Catholic Church. One of his ancestors had even gone so far in this respect as to knock down a Canon of Stendal on the open street—for which he had been excommunicated ; “and justly so,” added the Prince.

The Papal pretensions which Bismarck looked upon as a curse to Germany had their countervailing advantages to the Fatherland when asserted in France. To some friends at Varzin he said (in 1875) : “It is really a blessing for us, this rising predominance of the Clerical element in France, as thus the fencible power of the country is weakened. A battalion in which the *Aumônier* (chaplain) is of more account than the Major is easily beaten. There is much hypocrisy, but little service in it.”

Referring once to the Pope, Bismarck lauded Leo XIII. as one of the most acute and enlightened

statesmen of the time, who had been quick to perceive the importance of a well-ordered and Conservative State like Germany in Central Europe. But the Chancellor paid Queen Victoria a still greater compliment when, after conversing with her for some time at Charlottenburg (in the spring of 1888), whither she had gone to see her dying son-in-law—he pronounced her Majesty to be “gifted with statesman-like qualities of the very highest order.”

On the day (July 13th, 1874) when Bismarck, at Kissingen, was shot at and slightly wounded in the wrist by the Catholic fanatic, Kullmann—the Kulturkampf being then at its height—the Prince jovially remarked at dinner, “Well, the affair is not part of my prescribed course of waters, but it is only what a man of my profession must expect.”

Addressing a surging multitude the same evening from the balcony of his lodgings, with his arm in a sling, the Prince said: “It is not for me to anticipate judgment, but this I may safely say, that the blow aimed at me was not directed against my person, but the cause to which I have devoted my life—the unity, independence, and freedom of Germany. And even if I had died for that great cause, what more would it have been than what has happened to thousands of our countrymen who, three years ago, gave up their blood and lives upon the battlefield? But the great work which I have helped to begin with my poor powers will not be brought to naught by such means as that from which God has graciously preserved me. It will be finished by the force of the united German peoples.”



When Parliament met, the Chancellor, addressing himself to the Clericals, exclaimed, "Yes, gentlemen, you may push away from you the assassin Kullmann as much as ever you like, but he himself clings tightly to your coat-tails all the same." At his parliamentary reception the following evening, these words were naturally the subject of much comment, and Bismarck, leading some of his guests, including several ladies, into his study, showed them the revolver and the pistol with which Blind and Kullmann had respectively tried to take his life.

He had, he explained, come into possession of these two historic weapons in a very peculiar manner. Blind's revolver had been presented to him by his colleague, Delbrück, who had secured it at an auction of the would-be assassin's confiscated effects; and in the same way he had come by Kullmann's pistol. He had applied for it to the public prosecutor at Kissingen, who, not wishing to act on his own responsibility in such a matter, appealed to the Chamber of Finance at Würzburg, which in turn referred Bismarck to the Ministry of Finance in Munich, which, after grave consideration, decided that the Prince might have the weapon that had been levelled against him at its market value. It was only in this characteristically red-tape and roundabout way that the Prince became possessed of the pistol, and the Bavarian treasury of one thaler twenty silver groschen—about three shillings and threepence.

A few evenings after he had related this story, the parliamentary guests of the Chancellor were startled by a loud report of firearms in his study, and the first

impulse of all was to fear that the Prince might have been made the object of another *attentat* in his own house. Presently, too, it appeared that it was Blind's revolver which had been again at work. A deputy, Herr von Unruh-Bomst, had taken it up from the Chancellor's study table, and one of its barrels, strange to say, must have been left loaded all these eight years, for it suddenly went off, and the ball had even grazed the abdomen of what was described as a "Titanic" member of the Reichstag, Jordan-Deidesheim by name. Next day one of the journals asked whether the deputies had never heard of the maxim, "Never play with firearms."

But that other than the deputies had never heard of, or at least paid little heed to this maxim, was proved by a story, referring to this same time, which Bismarck himself told several years later—1889—the year after that of the accession of William II. In the Reichstag on the previous day there had been a very stormy scene. Some Radical had contemptuously cried out, *Pfui!* "Fie upon you!"—the most contemptuous of all German expressions—while the Chancellor was speaking, and, in challenging the author of the insult to stand up and declare himself, he used some very strong language himself.

At his next *soirée* he admitted that he had been rather violent, but pleaded that it was a most monstrous provocation to have had such a vile word as "*Pfui!*" flung into his teeth before all the Reichstag, which indeed was "tantamount to his having been spat upon." At the same time, he said, this was by no means the first time that a similar insult

had been offered him in the same place by a member of the Clerical Centre (Count Ballestrem). Just at that time he happened to have a loaded revolver in his pocket (for the Kullmann *attentat* had led to the discovery of other plots against his life), and involuntarily his hand wandered in search of this weapon. But he had checked himself in time, and left the dangerous thing lying in his pocket.

The Kulturkampf, with its Kullmanns and its Ballestrems, had not long reached the height of its fury when Bismarck, with the prescience of the political seer, began to warn his countrymen against the ominous gathering of the storm which was to produce a Hödel and a Nobiling. "Socialism," he remarked at one of his *soirées*, in December 1875, "has been making immense progress—much more so than you fancy, gentlemen, as you will see from the next elections. In a few years the penal clauses which you are now almost unanimous in rejecting will be demanded by the *bourgeoisie* as ardently as the lonely traveller in the desert longs for a drop of water."

The penal clauses referred to were contained in the new Press Law for all Germany; and on the subject of the Press the Chancellor remarked: "In all our newspapers there is too much demand for the sensational, as if something of the kind must occur every day. Every issue must contain something quite new, important, extraordinary. In this way they spoil their readers, who now expect and demand such entertainment from their papers. The latter in turn demand it of their correspondents, who are thus

placed in a dire dilemma. For if their reports contain nothing that is new or important they are put down by their editors as either too negligent or too easy-going to look about properly for news, or they are suspected of a lack of good connections. In this predicament the correspondent sets to work and takes counsel of his fancy, or he goes to the Embassies, which of course only furnish him with such news as serves a special purpose."

Referring on a subsequent occasion of the same kind to the inadequate means afforded by the Press Law for combating the "excesses" of Social Democracy the Prince said: "I have always told our Sovereigns, 'If you combat Social Democracy by all the means at your command, you suppress an acute disease. Care for the middle class, and you bring on a chronic disease difficult to cure.' Parleying with the revolutionary parties seems to me just the same as if we were to send a lawyer to negotiate with France, in the event of her declaring war."

Some one having wondered where the Social Democrats got so much money for the purposes of agitation, Bismarck remarked: "Possibly they get some from France—perhaps a million francs or so—scarcely more. The French devote a lot of money to bribery and corruption, purchase of journalists, etc. Yes, that they do in the higher circles even of some countries that one would never think of. We are obliged to do these things in a more roundabout way. The French are less particular. They have the knack of wrapping up an ugly proposal in pretty phrases, and making an offer in this direct form. I should only

like to know how they manage to conceal these large sums in their annual budgets—I have never been able to discover.”

As the Press Law, in the opinion of the Chancellor, was much too indulgent, so he also looked upon the Criminal Code of the Empire as far too lenient in many respects. It was a great mistake of legislators, he said at one of his *soirées* in December 1875, to yield to unwholesome sentiment and set so high a value on the individual, sacrificing to him the interests of the whole community. He quoted the case of the man Thomas, who had recently destroyed so many lives by the explosion of his infernal machine at Bremen, and asked the jurists present how they would classify his crime.\* One said it was murder, another, murder with *dolus indeterminatus*; a third, attempted murder; a fourth, arson; a fifth, destruction of property by explosives. But all agreed that, had Thomas himself lived, he could not have been condemned to death, but only to penal servitude for life.

It was this same intolerance of a “sickly and unsound sentimentality” which had made Bismarck successfully resist the false humanitarians who wished to abolish capital punishment, and also press for the

\* William King Thomas took it into his head to contrive an infernal machine which should explode and destroy the steamer *Mosel* soon after its leaving Bremen for New York, his object being to gain the insurance money on certain wares which he had insured far beyond their value, and meant to despatch by the vessel. By the premature explosion of his machine about a hundred people were killed, and as many wounded.

bombardment of Paris as the best, and, on the whole, the most merciful means of bringing the besieged to their senses. "But there are some people" (including the Crown Prince and Princess) "who above all things want to be praised for their humanity, and thus spoil all our plans. These people seem to forget altogether that our first duty of humanity is to think of our own soldiers, and see to it that they are not exposed to unnecessary suffering and shot dead into the bargain."

It was the same intolerance of a false humanity which pervaded Bismarck's conversation with the American ex-President, General Grant, when the latter went to Berlin about the time (June 1878) that the old Emperor was seriously wounded by the fowling piece of the Socialist Dr. Nobiling, within three weeks after Hödel's unsuccessful attempt to take his Majesty's life.

*Grant*: "I hope his Majesty will soon get better."

*Bismarck*: "The prospect is as good as it can be; the Kaiser has a strong constitution, as well as much courage and patience, but you know he is an old man."

*Grant*: "This circumstance only increases the horror inspired by the crime."

*Bismarck* (with evident emotion): "Here you have an old man, one of the best men on the earth, and yet they try to take his life. There never was a man of a simpler, more magnanimous, and more humane character than the Emperor. He is totally different from those who are born to such a high position—or at least, from many of them. You know that persons of

his rank, princes by birth, are inclined to look upon themselves as something wholly different from other men, attaching but little value to the feelings and wishes of others. But the Emperor, on the contrary, is a man in all things. He has never in his life wronged any one, nor hurt any one's feelings, nor acted with severity. He is one of those men whose kindly disposition wins all hearts, and he is always occupied with, and mindful of, the happiness and welfare of his subjects, and of those about him.

"It is impossible to imagine a finer, nobler, more amiable and beneficent type of a nobleman, with all the high qualities of a Sovereign and the virtues of a man. I should have thought that the Emperor could have passed through all his dominions alone, without danger, and now they seek to kill him. In certain respects the Kaiser resembles his ancestor Frederick William, the father of Frederick the Great ; inasmuch as the old King had the same homely sort of character, lived simply and retired, and led a true family life, possessing all republican virtues. And so it is with our Kaiser, who is in all things so republican that even the most incarnate democrat would admire him, if his judgment were impartial."

*Grant* (remarking that there was only one remedy—the gallows—against the principles which had endangered the life of the Emperor): "I do not see why a person who commits such a crime, that not only imperils the life of an aged Sovereign but also fills the world with horror, should not be visited with the severest punishment."

*Bismarck*: "That is precisely my view ; and my

conviction on this head is so strong that (among other reasons) I resigned the reins of power in Alsace so as not to have to exercise mercy in cases of capital punishment. It was impossible for me to force my conscience. Well, now, look at this aged nobleman, this Emperor of ours, whose subjects sought to murder him : such is his largeness of heart that he never will confirm a sentence of death. It is impossible to imagine anything more unique—a monarch whose clemency has, so to speak, abolished capital punishment, becoming himself on that very account the victim of a murder, or an attempt to murder ! That is a fact, but in this respect I cannot agree with the Emperor ; and in Alsace, where I as Chancellor had to countersign acts of mercy, I always inwardly rebelled against doing so. In Prussia that is the business of the Minister of Justice, but in Alsace it fell to me. I feel, as the French say, that we owe justice something, and that in the case of crimes like this they must be severely punished."

*Grant* : " There is only one means of dealing with such people ; they must be destroyed."

*Bismarck* : " Exactly so."

General Grant carried away with him the impression that the German Chancellor was the most interesting conversationalist he had ever met.

Another American politician, Carl Schurz, who subsequently came to Berlin and was entertained by the Chancellor, said that the best table-talkers he had ever known were Mazzini and Oliver Wendell Holmes, but that Bismarck was better than either.



## CHAPTER X.

### *HONEST BROKER.*

AT the time of the conversation between Bismarck and General Grant on the subject of Dr. Nobiling's crime, the Congress of Berlin was about to meet to square the results of the Russo-Turkish war with the interests of Europe.

"As for the Treaty of San Stefano," said Bismarck to General Grant, "I think the whole situation might thus be summed up: Russia has swallowed more than she can digest, and the Congress must try to give her relief."

At the close of the Congress, the Chancellor remarked to Lord Salisbury: "I have conducted this Conference sometimes like a gentleman, and sometimes like a sergeant-major."

Curiously enough, when first Bismarck saw Anton von Werner's famous picture of this diplomatic sanhedrim, he complained to the artist that he had made him—the Chancellor—look like a *Wachtmeister* (sergeant-major).

A few years later the Chancellor went to see the very fine panorama of Sedan which had been executed by the same artist, when he scanned very carefully all the details of the accompanying diorama represent-

ing his first meeting with Napoleon on the morning after the battle, near the weaver's cottage. He could not, he said, remember whether, in the hurry of leaving his quarters at Donchery, he had put on his sash, as indicated by the painter, but in any case it was inaccurate of the artist not to have added his cartouche-case as well. "For thus," he said, "you will make me go down to posterity as an incorrect soldier, and if the Emperor sees this he will certainly find fault with it. My trusty Rosa" [the horse he rode] "is well done: it was a strong-boned animal—but a mare, whereas you have given it rather a male head. Ah me! she died last year."

The same artist had been commissioned to execute a series of wall-pictures commemorative of the war for the Rathhaus at Saarbrück, and when he applied to Bismarck for an appropriate motto to his portrait, the latter pondered a little and then said, "*Ohne Kaiser, kein Reich*"—"Without an Emperor, no Empire."

But to return to the Congress. About the beginning of its sittings, Bismarck, the "honest broker," the President of the Congress, gave a dinner to the members, the parole on this occasion being, "Not a word of politics!" And yet the Greek Minister, M. Rhangabé, deftly succeeded in evading this rule, and in giving full expression to the national aspirations of his countrymen. The *menu*, like the music, was of an international character, and there was one course of vegetables "*à la Macédonie*." On this dish being handed round, M. Rhangabé passed it on without helping himself.

"But, Excellency, why don't you take some

Macedonia?" asked Bismarck, to whom the Greek minister sat opposite.

"Only *some*, your Serene Highness? Why, I should like the whole of it!"

The Crown Prince wished to give a farewell "peace-dinner" to the members, and Bismarck took occasion to ask Lord Beaconsfield whether the next Thursday would suit him for this purpose.

"Your Highness already speaks of peace and parting, but is that not selling the bear's skin before it is killed?"

"Well," rejoined the Chancellor, "it is for you to kill the bear" [Russia].

"That is precisely what I mean to do," replied the British Premier.

Some time after the Congress Herr von Dietze-Barby asked Bismarck which of the plenipotentiaries he regarded as the first diplomatist.

"Ah, that I cannot tell you," answered the Chancellor; "but certainly the second was Lord Beaconsfield."

Shortly after the Congress, Lord Ampthill was conversing with Bismarck on the character of the first English plenipotentiary, when the Chancellor pointed out that the only three works of art which adorned his room were portraits of his wife, the Emperor, and Lord Beaconsfield!

On the other hand this was what was written by Bayard Taylor, American Minister in Berlin: "I made the acquaintance of all the members of the Congress. After Gortchakoff . . . I was most impressed by Beaconsfield. . . . But Bismarck is still

a head higher than all these. . . . Think of seeing and talking with Bismarck, Gortchakoff, Beaconsfield, Andrassy, Waddington, Mehemet Ali Pasha, Curtius, Mommsen, Lepsius, Helmholtz, Grant, etc., etc., the same day! They are all pleasant and accessible people, but Bismarck is an amazing man."

And again: "Yesterday, when I had my first interview with Bismarck, he began with, 'I read one of your books through with my wife during my late illness.' I passed an hour with him alone, in the garden behind the palace, and felt in ten minutes as if I had known him for years. I was astounded at the freedom with which he spoke, but I shall honour his confidence, and say nothing for years to come. . . .

"On Saturday I had an hour's talk with Bismarck in the garden behind his palace; he being accompanied by a huge black dog, and I by a huge brown bitch. I tell you he is a *great* man! We talked only of books, birds, and trees, but the man's deepest nature opened now and then, and I saw his very self."

At one of his parliamentary *soirées* shortly before the outbreak of the war, which was followed by the Berlin Congress, Bismarck said that he had known exactly for two years already how the Eastern question could best be solved.

At this there was a sudden silence in the room, and all pricked up their ears to listen. But this silence was followed by peals of laughter when the Prince added:

"At the same time, as Germany has no interest in the Eastern question, I would rather say nothing about it."

Indeed, according to the Chancellor, the direct interest of Germany in this question was so slight as not to be worth "the healthy bones of a Pomeranian musketeer"; and that was why he did all he could to limit the area of the inevitable war to Russia and Turkey. As for England's intervention, he did not see that much could come of it. He might compare a struggle between England and Russia to a fight between a fish and a wolf—or rather, between a whale and a bear—which never could get at each other properly, and had to use long poles for the purpose—a metaphor of a rather mixed kind.

The only thing that could induce Germany to abandon her attitude of strict neutrality would be the necessity of going to the assistance of Austria should this Power see fit to take the field against Russia, and be worsted in the encounter. Germany could never stand idly by and behold Austria receive a deadly or even a dangerous wound. The maintenance of this State was an absolute necessity for the balance of power in Europe, and in no circumstances could Germany afford to let its integrity be impaired. The German provinces were the corner-stone of the Dual Monarchy, which could not hold together but for these, and hence the stupidity of those who represented him as hankering after these provinces for Germany. No; these provinces were as absolutely necessary for the stability of the Dual Monarchy as the continuance of this Monarchy was essential to the safety of the general situation in Europe, so let him hear no more about his own lust of conquest in this direction. Friendship with Russia if possible, but

friendship with Austria at all costs—such, in brief, was the principle which would always determine his attitude to the Eastern question.

“First of all,” he said, upon another occasion of the same kind, “we have to look after our own interests, then those of Austria which coincide with ours; and after that we must continue to live on as good a footing as may be with Russia.” Volumes could not have better expressed the Chancellor’s principles of international policy.

Bismarck followed the war with the critical glance of a soldier, as well as with the vigilant eye of a diplomatist. “If I were the Tsar,” he remarked after Plevna, when the fortune of arms seemed to be against the Russians, “I would lead my troops back to the left bank of the Danube, and there remain for the winter. I would, however, at the same time issue a manifesto to the Powers declaring that, if necessary, I was prepared to continue the war for seven years, even if I should be reduced to carry it on with peasants armed with dungforks and flails. I would then begin next spring by taking a few of the large fortresses on the Danube, and gradually work my way farther.”

Talking with Dr. Carl Braun, of Wiesbaden, Bismarck remarked: “Frederick the Great used to say of Kaiser Joseph II. that he always wanted to take a second step before finishing his first. Take care that the same isn’t said of us. Germany has great tasks—above all things, that of preserving the peace of Europe. This must be our guiding principle in the Eastern crisis. We shall not intervene save in

a case of extreme necessity, for this intervention of ours might cause a European conflagration. Were Austrian and Russian interests to come into collision on the Balkan Peninsula, and were we to side with one of these States, France would certainly join the other, and a European war would be the result. . . .

"As for Turkey, I don't believe that she will be partitioned, and the 'unspeakable Turk,' as Mr. Gladstone calls him, expelled from Europe altogether. Mr. Gladstone, at any rate, isn't the man to do this"—Gladstone, of whom the Chancellor subsequently said that he had so long played with words that now the words played with him.

But on the British Premier Bismarck once passed a much more severe verdict still.

Speaking at Hatfield, August 30th, 1884, Lord Lytton, Ex-Viceroy of India, said: "Shall I tell you what was said the other day by a statesman whom I take to be the greatest, as he is certainly the most successful and powerful, in Europe? It was only a few weeks ago that I heard, through an acquaintance of Prince Bismarck, a recent remark of his, that if, in the course of his whole life, he had inflicted upon Germany half the ignominy and weakness which Mr. Gladstone has inflicted upon England in the course of four years, he (fearless and resolute man as we know him to be) would not have had the courage to look his countrymen in the face again." \*

In speaking thus Bismarck was thinking of Mr.

\* Compare this with what Bismarck said of Emil Ollivier, P. 343.

Gladstone's great betrayal of England's honour to the Boers after Majuba Hill, his vacillating policy in Egypt, his unworthy truckling to the French, and other kindred incidents in his ministerial career. But above all things the German Chancellor had in his mind's eye the shame which the Gladstone Cabinet had brought upon England by its dog-in-the-manger and ineffectual opposition to his colonial schemes. It was some time before the Gladstone Government could realise that Bismarck was in earnest with these schemes, for his conversion to a colonial policy had been rather sudden.

When some one talked to the Chancellor during the French War of the cession of Pondicherry as part of the French war-indemnity, he brusquely remarked : " I want no colonies. They are good for nothing but supply stations. For us in Germany, this colonial business would be just like the silken sables in the noble families of Poland, who have no shirts to their backs." And again, several years later : " I am no friend of emigration, and I fight against it as much as I can. A German who can put off his Fatherland, like an old coat, is no longer German for me, and my clansmanlike interest in him is gone."

But not long after this, the Chancellor stood forth in the Reichstag and, declaring that the times had changed and he with them, announced that the German flag would now follow German trade in all the unappropriated portions of the globe.

" Gentlemen," said Bismarck at one of his beer-evenings to a group of deputies who were discussing his new over-sea enterprise, " colonial policy is not



carried on by Generals or Privy Councillors, but by trading houses and commercial travellers."

In reply to the remark of the Rector of the Berlin University that the Mark of Brandenburg seemed to him to furnish the best colonising material, the Chancellor opined that the Swabians were even superior in this respect, they being a pure German race who stuck to their national qualities with especial tenacity and maintained their individuality among foreign elements.

And yet the Chancellor once told a story tending to show that the Swabians possessed a very special faculty for the assimilation of alien ways. Talking about the ubiquity of the enterprising Swabians—those Aberdeenshire Scots, so to speak, of the Fatherland—the Prince related that once, when travelling in France, he had entered a restaurant and been served by a waiter whom he at once perceived to be a South German, in spite of his very fluent French. Now, it was known to him that the district of Balingen, in Swabia, was then noted for the number of waiters which it had sent forth, and it occurred to him that he would have a shot at the fellow. So without more ado he suddenly asked him, in German, "You are from Balingen, are you not?" The poor chap, who really and truly hailed from that district, grew as white as a ghost, in the belief probably that he had been tracked down by a detective who was too much for him.

During the sitting of the West African Conference (winter of 1884-85) Bismarck's guests at dinner one day included Henry M. Stanley and Herr Woermann

of Angra Pequena fame. The latter was astonished at the fluency with which the Chancellor spoke English with the hero of the Dark Continent, and afterwards the Prince expressed his surprise at the fact that a man like Stanley, by simply walking across Africa, had succeeded in founding so large an Empire as that of the Congo State. On this occasion Herr Woermann said he carried away the impression that the ease with which Stanley had founded this State had done much to render the Chancellor far more favourable than before to a colonial policy, and to the acquisition of African territory for this purpose.

Bismarck had cast a covetous eye on South-East as well as South-West Africa, and therefore he made himself particularly agreeable to a Boer deputation which came to Berlin in the summer of 1884—just at the time when his colonial squabbles with England had reached their climax. At the head of this Boer deputation was President Krüger, and when he sat at the table of the Emperor beside the Chancellor, the latter managed to make himself understood in Platt-Deutsch to the Dutch Chief of the Transvaal, who could converse in no language but his own. In former times Latin used to be the means of communication between those who had no other common medium of speech; and Bismarck himself once said that, “when I was in the highest form at school, I wrote and spoke Latin very well, though now it has become difficult for me, and I have quite forgotten my Greek.”

Once, too, he boasted that he was “about the only

man in the Foreign Office who understood Russian"—a language, he suggested, which might be substituted for Greek as a means of educational discipline, and which he himself had acquired during his residence at St. Petersburg, where two favourite inmates of his house were a native tutor and a bear. And not only did he master Russian, but he also learned Polish, so that once during the French War when a Polish sentry refused to allow him to enter a particular house, it was only when he addressed the man in his own Slavonic dialect that he was permitted to pass.

But the Chancellor's linguistic attainments did not stop here. In honour of the International Conference for delimiting the Græco-Turkish frontier (June 1880), Bismarck gave a dinner, at which he paid great attention to Colonel Perrier, Chief of the Geographical Section of the French War Ministry, whose technical acquirements had led to his appointment as committee-reporter to the Conference.

"On entering his drawing-room in full uniform," wrote the Colonel, "the Chancellor welcomed me in the most cordial manner, and, laying his hands on my shoulders, said, 'How tall you are, Colonel!'

" 'Not so tall as your Highness,' I replied.

"After dinner we all went out into the garden behind—for it was a beautiful summer evening—the Chancellor leading the way with me.

" 'And now you must taste my cognac,' he said. 'For the last twenty years I have got it from an excellent source in Bordeaux—I can give you the address, if you like.'

"The conversation grew very animated, and lots of

anecdotes were told—especially about the Southern French, Bismarck showing that he was quite at home in this field, and treating us to some rattling good stories about Marseilles. Here the Italian Ambassador remarked that I myself was a Southerner, and very proud of it too.

“‘But not from Marseilles surely?’ inquired the Chancellor, with a smile, as he thought of the Marseilles stories which he had just been telling.

“‘Oh, no,’ I replied; ‘I am from the Cevennes.’

“‘Well, then, you are a Protestant, I suppose?’

“I answered in the affirmative, and then Bismarck began to speak of the Huguenots who had been driven from the South of France, describing their exodus in the liveliest of colours, their arrival in Prussia, which they did so much to benefit, and showing himself wonderfully well versed in the history of these emigrants.

“‘In the South of France,’ he said, ‘life is very pleasant; if I could only go there I should not suffer so much from rheumatism.’

“He now proceeded to speak of the wars of the Albigenes and the Troubadours, reciting—with a strong Teutonic accent, it is true—a fourteenth-century poem of the minnesinger, Bertram de Born, in the Provençal dialect. While doing all this he failed not to honour duly the cognac from his excellent source in Bordeaux, till at last the Princess gently reminded him that the evening air was now growing rather chill for him—a remark which the Chancellor’s guests construed as a signal to break up.”

Frequent were the occasions on which the Princess

thus acted as a *Dea ex machina* to her grateful lord.

For example : the ambassador of a Great Power one day called on Bismarck, and, in the course of a rather long conversation, asked the Prince how he managed to get rid of troublesome visitors—of bores, in fact. "Oh, that is very simple," replied the Chancellor. "When my wife thinks any one is staying too long, she merely sends for me, and thus the interview ends." At that very moment a servant entered, and, bowing low, begged his master to favour the Princess with his presence for a few minutes. The ambassador blushed, and at once withdrew, as gracefully as possible in the trying circumstances.

"She it is who has made me what I am," once said Bismarck of his wife to Signor Crispi ; and to others also he never missed an opportunity of eulogising her economic virtues.

The band of a Saxon rifle regiment had come to Berlin (July 1874) to give a series of concerts, and one day, after treating the Chancellor to some "table music," the members were invited in and shown all the historical curiosities of his palace. "These are my wife's apartments," he said, "and, as you see" (pointing to a safe), "she acts as my treasurer. If any of you are married, let me give you this piece of good advice : leave the purse also to your wife, and take nothing out of it which she doesn't give you. From the very first I left my wife in charge of the purse, and laid myself out for politics—and I have always found that this was a very good arrangement.

"And here, look you, is a great curiosity—the table

on which peace was signed at Versailles. Here we sat—Thiers, Favre, and I—playing whist with a dummy ; and that the dummy finally won was partly due to you, for had all our men not behaved so bravely there would have been no trumps for me to hold in my hand. Had we only been a united people two centuries ago, there is no reason why the French should have then tyrannised over us as they did. But now, thanks be to God, we are united, and I trust we shall ever remain so. In that case, should the French try to meddle with us again, we shall lay them on their backs as before.”

Referring to the campaign of 1866—in which the Saxons had taken part against Prussia as the allies of the Austrians—the Prince made each of his visitors shake hands with him and promise that all the events of that painful time should be forgotten and forgiven.

“And you may tell every honest Saxon,” continued the Chancellor, “that I shall always take off my hat to them ; for they alone had the courage to show us a bold front when all the others” [Austrians] “had lost their heads” [at Königgrätz].

Hereupon the Prince asked the senior of the bandsmen what he meant to do when his time was up.

The man replied that he had thoughts of joining the *gendarmérie* (rural constabulary), or the telegraph service.

“Ah, very well,” quoth the kindly Chancellor. “If the latter is your aim, you had better come to me, as I have some influence in that quarter.”

But while thus enjoining on Saxon, Bavarian, and

Prussian alike, the duty of forgetting past differences, and of losing sight of their "narrower Fatherland"\* in their citizenship of the Empire, the Chancellor argued that the several representatives of the Federal Sovereigns at Berlin should display the utmost independence of thought and action in dealing with all the questions submitted to their consideration.

Speaking with a deputy from Lübeck and another from Stuttgart at one of his *soirées* (April 1872), Bismarck said :

"It is a pleasant thing about the meeting of the Reichstag that it always enables us to meet our old friends again, and to keep our views fresh by an exchange of opinion between North and South. That should also be the task of the Federal Council" [representing the allied Sovereigns], "but with its present composition this is impossible. I consider it a great advantage of our constitution that the Empire consists of such a variety of States—large and small ; and it should be the business of the Bundesrath to give a true reflection, from its particular point of view, of the aims and wishes of the whole Empire. It is, however, painful to me to think that the minor States and their representatives do not appear to recognise this ; at least, they do not venture to speak out. As a matter of fact I should like to have more opposition from them, and construe this reserve on their part as a want of confidence in the honesty of my intentions. It was a positive misfortune that

\* "*Engeres Vaterland*"—the particular State (Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria etc.) in which a German subject happens to be born, as opposed to the "entire Fatherland."

Prussia became so large in 1866, and for my part, I should like to have seen Hanover, Hesse, and Nassau maintained as Sovereign States. Unfortunately that could not be, the dynasties in question were so degenerate, and no longer able to understand their position and their duties. They even carried their folly so far as to divide humanity into men, women, and princes.

"After the Peace" [of Frankfort] "it was rumoured that the Emperor intended to give me a large sum of money and make me ruling Duke of Lauenburg. Well, I should have been very glad to have thus been granted a bit of sovereign ground under my feet.\* But I should have acted very differently" [from the minor Sovereigns] "had I thus become a member of the Federal Council. In that body, as in the English House of Lords, the various Governments should assume a much firmer and more outspoken attitude towards the Imperial Government. But what are you to do with a number of jog-trot old bureaucrats who always want to know what the large and powerful States think of any matter before voting on it themselves?"

"Why, for example, should the Prince of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt not be as emphatic in his opposition as an English Lord? But he is afraid that the next

\* It will thus be seen that, in conferring the mere title of Duke of Lauenburg on Bismarck, when dismissing him from office (in 1890), William II. did even less than his grandfather, William I., had thought of doing a score of years previously. Anyhow, it was not a new idea on the part of the young Emperor at all.



time he comes to Berlin for the Emperor's birthday, or for a review, he will be treated rather coldly. Well, surely that wouldn't do him very much harm. Besides, I would willingly undertake to see to it that my gracious master should know nothing about such doings in the Federal Council. I should even have no objection to democratic brawlers being returned to this body who, heedless of Prussia, would out with their opinions in a firm and unreserved manner. Such a struggle would be sure to bring out for the first time what I believe to be the great advantage of our Federal Constitution ; but in our present temper there is no chance of this. It is only with time that the thing can be done."

This was a very fine theory of independence which Bismarck had preached ; but when any member of the Federal Council ventured on its serious practice, the Prince himself was the first to protest against it. Let one prominent instance suffice.

In the spring of 1880, the question of the day was the inclusion of Altona within the customs-frontier of the Empire—an act which the Senate of the Free City of Hamburg declared to be unconstitutional without its express assent. The question was laid before the Federal Council, and the Bavarian member of this body, Herr von Rudhart, had made no secret of his intention to support the view of the Hamburg Senate. What, therefore, was the surprise of this diplomatist, on presenting himself at the Chancellor's ensuing *soirée*, to be assailed by his host before the whole company with the bitterest of reproaches, including even the word "conspirator." Stammering

out some few words to the effect that the Prince must have been misinformed, Herr von Rudhart at once sent for his carriage, and, as soon as it was announced, gave his wife his arm and took his leave.

Smarting with shame and wounded pride the unfortunate diplomatist wrote his host a high-toned letter of expostulation. The Chancellor replied to this by requesting the Government of his offended guest to recall him from Berlin, and his Government hastened to comply with the Chancellor's demand by transferring its representative to St. Petersburg, where Bismarck himself had been similarly "placed in ice" about a score of years before. The Prince regretted this issue of the affair, but vowed he could not help it. "Had the man shown more spirit in the matter," he said afterwards, "it would have been different. It is true I may have spoken to him somewhat rudely, but he ought to have answered me still more rudely there and then, and the thing would have been over. Instead of that he went away and wrote me an insolent letter in cold blood, which I could not pardon."

How, on the other hand, a soft answer was ever calculated to turn away the Prince's wrath was well illustrated by the following incident.

A tipsy peasant fellow at Varzin had staggered up against the Princess, and been sharply pushed aside by her husband. What with the drink in his head and the shove he had got from the Chancellor, the man went sprawling; but, picking himself up, he apologised in such a humble and rueful manner that the Prince at once repented of having treated the boor so roughly.

"These people are so incredibly good-natured," he said to his wife, "that now I feel as if I should like to go and beg the fellow's pardon."

With a previous member of the Federal Council for Bavaria, Count Perglas, Bismarck had a difference which he treated with more delicacy.

The Prince had asked the Count to join him and his fellow-members of that body in defiling before the throne. The Count, however, preferred to attach himself for this purpose to the Diplomatic Corps, whereupon Bismarck addressed him in French, saying that as "Bavaria now appears to have resumed a European position" [which she had voluntarily abnegated on the establishment of the Empire], "I must, of course, converse with you in the usual language of diplomacy."

Four years after the Rudhart incident, there was again some talk at Friedrichsruh about the independence of Hamburg, which some had thought to be threatened by the policy of the Imperial Government, and Bismarck remarked :

"I should like to know who it is that is going to meddle with the position of Hamburg as an independent portion of the Empire. Certainly not the Empire itself, seeing that it is particularly solicitous about the independence of the Hanse Towns—especially Hamburg. It is only a pity that we haven't more of the same kind, as half a dozen such Free Cities would be a perfect blessing to our Confederation. If those already belonging to it were to cease to exist, there would only be left the larger States—Prussia, Bavaria, etc.—and then the proceed-

ings of the Federal Council would become very difficult. It is the minor States in the Confederation which act as mortar for the others."

In connection with the question of including the Hanse Towns within the Zollverein of the Empire, an official letter of Bismarck had somehow found its way into print; and being asked whether he had not felt very much annoyed by the indiscretion:

"Not in the least," he replied, "for the letter only showed that I had done my duty. Indeed, I felt like the statesman who, on hearing that a letter of his had been betrayed for the sum of thirty thalers, remarked that he would gladly have written thirty such letters for one thaler."

But while maintaining that the minor States should act as "mortar" to the Federal edifice, Bismarck was of opinion that Prussia should cease to give a specific character to the structure.

At one of his *soirées* (December 1875) a Würtemberg deputy remarked: "If people in the South could only get rid of the apprehension that Germany was to be absorbed by Prussia, and come to believe in the contrary process, we should all feel that the national unification had been rid of its last stone of offence."

"You are quite right," replied the Chancellor. "Prussia must be absorbed by Germany; but Prussia is rather stout. It must not be forgotten that I am the only German Minister; the others being Prussian, Bavarian, etc."

Two years later, at a dinner where Moltke was among his guests, the Chancellor, talking on the same subject, said:

"Prussia is more in want of Germanising than Germany of Prussianising."

Holding thus that the institutions of Prussia should be Germanised, the Chancellor was equally emphatic in declaring that the Constitutions both of Prussia and the Empire should not be abrogated or impaired.

The year 1872 had been the jubilee of Parliamentarism in Germany—Frederick William IV. having summoned the first United Diet to Berlin in 1847; and on some one—a reactionary—remarking to Bismarck, at one of his *soirées*, that Constitutionalism in Germany would last half a century longer at least, the Chancellor replied that he had too much to do with the present to be able to concern himself with profound speculations as to the future. But if he were to express an opinion as to Constitutions, he must say that they could no longer be dispensed with. Parliament and the Press were the necessary adjuncts of a Government, for even the greatest absolute monarch could no longer manage the complicated machinery of a modern State. Above all things it was the duty of Parliament and the Press to lay bare administrative abuses. With *la haute politique* (foreign affairs, etc.) they should concern themselves less, as in this field the leading threads of policy lay for the most part so much concealed as to make it impossible for the uninitiated to form a sufficiently sound opinion on the subject.

A few years later (February 1879) the Chancellor, at one of his *soirées*, referred to the charges urged against him by the Press, that his protectionist policy was but a masked advance towards reaction. But he

did not, he said, want any reaction. If so, he could easily have had it after 1866 and 1871. What was meant by the word "reaction"? Absolute rule. But this was no longer possible; a country must now be ruled with the aid of public opinion. Whoever wanted to hang modern times in ancient picture-frames must remember that these were liable to be broken by the slightest touch. Up to 1848 absolutism had been of the benevolent but unintelligent kind. If writers had to sign their articles, the Press could be made much more effective; but in existing circumstances, Parliaments were the best means of expressing public opinion that could be devised. He had no intention, therefore, of taking refuge in reaction, but he would accept allies wherever he could find them.\*

\* Speaking in the Reichstag a little later (July 9th, 1879), the Chancellor said: "On returning from the war of 1866 it would have been easy for me to say, 'Prussia has now expanded; her Constitution no longer suits her; we must amend it.' In short, I was in a position to carry out the boldest and most incisive policy of reaction with the success and *éclat* which still attached to me from Königgrätz. But, as you know, I did the opposite, and in doing so incurred the aversion of a large portion of my old political friends; it cost me a hard struggle to do the opposite of what they wished, to ask for a bill of indemnity and to go on with the Constitutional system. Gentlemen, I will not make myself better than I am. . . . I am no foe of Constitutionalism; on the contrary, I hold it to be the only possible form of government. If I had thought that absolutism in Prussia would have better promoted the work of German unity, I should most decidedly have counselled recourse to it. But after bitter struggles to overcome influences that were dear to me, I came to the conclusion that we must continue on the path of Constitutional law." See also p. 123.

But while thus declaring himself to be a constitutionalist, the Chancellor astonished his guests one evening (February 1881) by telling them that he had just committed a *coup d'état*. Hitherto, he said, it had been the rule in Prussia for fishing boats to show red and green lights in the darkness and during a storm, so as to obviate their being run down by passing vessels. In other States this rule had been long abolished. For, apart from the fact that the fishers themselves naturally did all they could to obviate such a danger, and that in the Kurischer Haff, for example, they couldn't afford to get the necessary lights, the rule in question was calculated to produce an effect the very opposite of what it aimed at, seeing that "the tumble and the tossing" of a stormy sea tended to reverse the position of the lights, and thus lure passing ships in the wrong direction—straight on to the top of the fishing boats. That would never do ; therefore he had blotted out this preposterous rule of the sea, and, in fact, committed a kind of *coup d'état*.

But while otherwise claiming to be a sincerely convinced Constitutionalist, Bismarck was for ever harping on the evils and defects of parliamentarism as practised in Germany. Talking once about professional politicians, he thought it was a great misfortune for Parliament that so many of its members always returned to it after new elections, seeing that they thus represented their own opinions and interests much less than those of the public. What was wanted was new men and fresh blood.

And then as to the plague of parties : " In a large State like Prussia or Germany it is not a question of

whether a particular Minister inclines more to the Right or the Left on any subject, for this tendency would be countervailed by Parliament. But it is much more important that government should be in one direction, for when half a dozen horses are yoked to a waggon, they must be made to obey one will, otherwise they won't get on."

"Don't you know," said the Prince on another occasion, "that wherever there are three Germans there are always four opinions? But perhaps it was a wise thing of Providence to have thus infected the Germans with such a passion for contrariety, seeing that, if united in all things, such" [tremendous] "fellows as they are would lift the whole world off its hinges." \*

At a later time (1878) the Chancellor remarked that parliamentary government of the English kind was his ideal. Such government was possible with two clearly defined parties, as in England; but not in Germany, where there were seven or eight different fractions. Even in the Prussian Chamber, too, some of these parties—the Progressists, for example—were organised differently from what they were in the Reichstag.

Some one having complained of the great inconvenience which arose from the simultaneous sitting of the Prussian and Imperial Parliaments in each of which many deputies held a seat, which thus entailed upon them an enormous amount of work, the Chancellor replied: "Well, we must have some consideration for the Bavarian, Würtemberg, or any other Diet; but a member of the Prussian Landtag who also accepts a seat in the Reichstag must simply have double nerves."

\* Compare p. 137.



## CHAPTER XI.

### *ÆSCULAPIUS AND ACHILLES.*

AT one of the Prince's *soirées* in November 1881 there was some talk about the proposed new Imperial House of Parliament (which now stands on the Königsplatz in Berlin, having been opened by William II. in 1894), and Herr von Unruh asked the Chancellor where it was going to be built.

The latter replied that, if he could have his own way in the matter, he would have it erected on the Pfingstberg, at Potsdam.

"Or the Blocksberg" [the mountain peak in the Harz where the witches hold their dance on Walpurgis Night], rejoined Von Unruh jocosely.

"No," rejoined the Prince. "I am really in earnest; the Reichstag should not be held in the capital. Just think how wise it was of the Americans to choose Washington, instead of New York, as the seat of their Legislature! The French, too, saw that Paris was unsuited for their Senate and Chamber of Deputies, and selected Versailles. In the same way the Germans should go to Potsdam."

To this Von Unruh objected that, in America, all the State departments were also at Washington; that the members of the Reichstag could not be housed

at Potsdam ; that the Imperial authorities should have the same location as the Prussian Ministries, and that therefore there could be no question of transferring the former to Potsdam, the cradle of the Prussian army.

But this reasoning did not at all satisfy the Chancellor, who contended that his plan was feasible enough, and that villas might be run up near the Pfingstberg for the accommodation of the deputies. On a later occasion, too, in the Reichstag, he gave serious expression to the same idea, although he had previously been excessively mortified by the decision of the Federal Council to locate at Leipzig the Supreme Court of the Empire.

On the other hand, however, Bismarck himself once threatened to transfer the seat of government to Munich. This was when he wanted to get Dr. Schweninger—a Munich man—appointed to the Chair of Dermatology in the University of Berlin, in order that this new-found and favourite physician of the Chancellor might always be conveniently near his person. But, owing to certain dark incidents in the past career of the Doctor, there arose a great outcry in Berlin against his being thus pitchforked into such a position of social and professional honour. The affair was brought before the Prussian Parliament, and even the Minister of Public Worship, Herr von Gossler, endeavoured to dissuade the Chancellor from carrying out his masterful purpose.\*

\* When questioned on the subject in the Prussian Chamber, the Minister of Public Worship was forced to admit that the Chancellor's "Banting" had once come into conflict with the

"Very well, then," at last said Bismarck to Gossler ; "do as you like. But let me give you timely warning—if Schweninger has to return to Munich, I shall certainly go with him." It is needless to say that the Doctor got his chair, and that Berlin thus continued to be the seat of the Imperial Government.

Schweninger—a very Semitic-looking man—had been introduced to the Chancellor by the latter's second son, Count "Bill," who, having grown enormously stout for a man of his age, had successfully submitted to a Banting process of maceration at the hands of the Munich doctor. In 1881 Schweninger went with his patient, Count "Bill," on a visit to Varzin, and on this occasion he was secretly consulted by the Princess regarding the Prince, and by the Prince regarding the Princess. His stay was prolonged until he had to remind the Prince that the duties of his profession in Munich summoned him away. Before he went, however, the Chancellor had poured out his whole complaint to him. No sleep, aches and pains in nerves and veins, disordered digestion—doctors and prescriptions all of no use ! The doctors, he said, had told him that he was worn out ; that he must lie on a sofa and stay indoors ; that he must avoid all excitement ; virtually, in fact, that he must patiently await the arrival of death for release.

Schweninger listened patiently to all this tale of woe, but he refused to prescribe unless he were per-  
criminal law, but contended that the services of the "nameless doctor," as he was called, "to the person of our leading statesman were meritorious enough to make it possible for us to overlook his moral delinquencies."

mitted to undertake the whole treatment and the whole responsibility. He declared his opinion that unless "the Chancellor's whole way of living were changed, unless he practised strict self-command, and allowed his diet, exercise, repose, etc., to be submitted to a most scrupulous and minute control, he might drag along as he was doing for some six months longer, but that Nature would then imperiously assert her rights."

Six months later, when Schweninger passed through Berlin on his way to Dantzig, Bismarck had been given up by the doctors, whose diagnosis wavered between cancer of the liver and cancer of the stomach. His powers were failing, and he lost in weight daily. Schweninger, on being consulted informally, still confined his replies to precepts of a general nature. But he had scarcely arrived in Dantzig when a telegram summoned him back to Berlin. The Prince's family were in despair; the Prince had resolved to entrust himself unreservedly to Schweninger's care. But the difficulty lay in the impossibility of controlling or dictating to the Chancellor, who was accustomed to command rather than to obey.

There was a very dramatic scene—the Prince walking up and down in a state of alternate acquiescence and rebellion, Schweninger calmly eyeing him and awaiting his decision. At an early stage of this first consultation the Prince was said to have lost his temper and to have growled, "Don't ask so many questions"; to which Schweninger replied, "Then please consult a veterinary surgeon; he asks no questions!" When, at the close of the interview,

Bismarck tugged at the bell, the doctor was in doubt as to whether he was not to be shown out into the street. But the command was, "Fetch the Doctor's things from the station," and thenceforth Schweninger continued to be the Chancellor's body physician—almost, indeed, a member of his household. Schweninger was actually the hundred-and-first doctor who had tried his skill on Bismarck, who said, "The difference between Schweninger and my former doctors lies in this: that I treated them, while Schweninger treats me."

At first Schweninger found it impossible to persuade his patient to go to bed at ten, and used, therefore, to call punctually at that hour for a long time to make sure that he had really retired. This was well known in the circles which Schweninger frequented; and when he disappeared at the usual hour, people used to say, "He has to go and put the Prince to bed first."

An irreverent Frenchman once remarked that "if the Colossus ever died, it would be in consequence of a colossal fit of indigestion"; and, indeed, the Chancellor had frequently exposed himself to danger in this respect. Once he remarked that he was very fond of "hard-boiled eggs, though now" [in 1870] "he could only manage three; but the time was when he could make away with eleven." "In our family," he said upon another occasion, "we are all great eaters. If there were many in the country with such a capacity, the State could not exist. I should have to emigrate." And again: "If I am to work well, I must be well fed. I can make no proper peace if

they don't give me proper food and drink ; that's part of my pay ;"—which reminds one of the reply of Clearchus to the envoys of the Persian King, "that there was no one who would dare to talk to the Greeks of a truce without first supplying them with a breakfast."

He always preferred strong food, especially marrow ; and in trying to bite through the hind leg of a hare he once lost a tooth. Lothar Bucher, the Prince's secretary, related this a few days afterwards to the French Ambassador, M. de Courcel, who exclaimed, in astonishment, "*Oh, mon Dieu ! Oh, mon Dieu !*"

He had always been a great eater, a deep drinker, and a heavy smoker. In his earlier days, indeed, he was what the Germans call a "chain-smoker"—a species of the weed-consuming genus whose morning and night is connected by a cable of cigars, each link of which is lighted at the stump of its predecessor. Bismarck once related that in this way he had, for example, smoked all the way from Cologne to Berlin, a railway journey of about ten hours. "Happy man !" once sighed Gambetta to a friend who was talking to him about the German Chancellor. "Happy man ! Beer and smoke agree with him." But the time came when he could not even look at a cigar. "I have not given up cigars," he once said ; "it is they who have given up me."

But not even Schweninger could wean him from his love of good drink—Schweninger, of whom his illustrious patient once said : "The nearer one is to Rome, the more he may sin." A couple of Germans living in Warsaw wagered a hundred roubles as to

whether their Chancellor drank more wine or beer, and applied to him directly for a settlement of the point. "His Highness," replied his secretary, "directs me to inform you that you are both right, as he is equally fond of good wine and good beer, and, with the exception of those days when he is ill, drinks the one as well as the other."

Once, when entertaining at Friedrichsrüh a deputation of veterans from Kissingen, the Chancellor pressed his visitors to drink champagne, saying that one or other of them would be sure to have to make a speech yet, and that would give him courage. "It was ever so with myself," he added; "I always spoke much better in the Reichstag when I had a flask of Moselle and a pint of champagne under my belt."

"I have received so many presents of wine," said the Chancellor once to some guests, "that I am afraid I shall not be able to drink it all in this world. I grudge my heirs nothing except my wine cellar."

All that Schweninger could do was to instruct the Chancellor how to enjoy his cellar in the most innocent manner. Once a certain Dr. Hofman of Hamburg went to Friedrichsrüh and found the Prince seated on a sofa, engaged in drinking a pint of champagne out of the bottle itself. The Prince explained, in extenuation of this unpleasant practice, that Dr. Schweninger had ordered him to do so in order that he might thus wholly assimilate the carbonic acid in the liquid. He (the Prince) added, that he must offer the same explanation to every one, so as to obviate the suspicion of his being a secret toper.

At a dinner he gave (April 1876) to the members

of a Cholera Commission, consisting of some of the brightest medical luminaries in the Fatherland, one of them, Dr. Günther, sought to interest the Chancellor in the subject of the pollution of rivers.

"*Ach!*" exclaimed the Prince, "away with your examinations of water—what can come of that? Wine and beer are the things you ought to examine—it is incredible the extent to which they are adulterated."

Dr. Günther replied that no beer-analysis of which he had any knowledge had ever revealed the existence of noxious elements. If any one suffered from drinking malt liquor, it was to be assumed—either that he had taken too much, or that the beer had not been well kept, or that the ingredients used in its production had not been wholly free from objection. But the Prince stuck to his proposition, maintaining the necessity for the frequent analysis of beer and wine.

And, *à propos*, he wondered how it was that in many districts of Prussia, where wine used to be grown, it was grown no longer. Was this because the climate in the interval had become rawer, or that our taste had grown more refined, and could no longer relish the vineyard products of certain districts? The latter theory seemed to the Chancellor to be the likelier of the two, and none of his scientific guests sought to gainsay it.

Once, when speaking of agriculture, the Chancellor went on to compare the Pomeranians and the Nether Saxons. The former were sober, moderate, and easily satisfied, while the Saxons, on the other hand, bearing



more resemblance to the English, sought to make life as comfortable and easy as possible.

And, suiting the action to the word, the Prince took hold of a huge silver jug and began to fill the glasses of his guests with Bavarian beer. In doing this he drew their attention to the massive lid, which was adorned with a fine medallion portrait. "That is the head," he said, "of Field-Marshal Derfflinger" [the conqueror of the Swedes at Fehrbellin], "who was one of my ancestors."

Thereupon some one asked whether this was a model of the famous "Bernau Jug" which had played such a prominent *rôle* in the life of the illustrious Field Marshal. Young Derfflinger, who had been apprenticed to a tailor, was one day despatched to the neighbouring townlet of Bernau in the Mark to fetch a jug of beer. But instead of returning home with the liquor, he had drunk it all up, and then enlisted as a soldier—much to the advantage of his fatherland. Bismarck was proud of his ancestor for having done this.

Bernau is not so very far from Rathenow, the town nearest to Bismarck's own birthplace of Schönhausen, on the Elbe; and when a civic deputation (in 1875) came to Berlin to present the Chancellor with the freedom of the little borough, they were received with a warmth such as the Prince had shown to the bearers of no similar compliment from the largest cities in the Fatherland. "Gentlemen," he said, when introducing the deputation to his guests at a parliamentary *soirée*, "you are not to look upon Rathenow as a place of no account. It is, in fact, one of the

most important towns in the Prussian monarchy; for it was there that the Great Elector, in 1675, laid the foundation of what is now the Prussian army, while it was there also, in 1848, that I myself began my parliamentary career. It was there that I delivered my maiden speech, and got pelted with stones for doing so."

But as young Derfflinger had drunk up the beer that was intended for his parents, so there were modern imitations of the embryo Field Marshal who scrupled not to tamper with the liquor which was consigned to the Imperial Chancellor.

In the Reichstag one day (November 1874) Bismarck had contended for an increase of Imperial taxation in a certain form, saying that the "Reich's-cask should everywhere be tapped"; and at his parliamentary *soirée* the same evening he himself was the first to fill his mug from a keg of beer which had been placed upon the table. But there seemed to be something wrong with the taste of the malt liquor, and the Chancellor shook the keg lightly, in order to see whether it had been quite full—this being essential to the perfect flavour of the beer. The shaking of the keg revealed the existence of a vacuum decidedly larger than that which would have been merely created by the contents of the tankard he had drawn off, and then he remarked, with a laugh, "Look here, gentlemen, here is another argument in favour of the taxation policy for which I pleaded to-day, for even this Reich's-cask here has not been left untapped on its way from Munich."

At another of his "beer-evenings" (March 1881)

the Chancellor forgathered with some of his old fellow-students and began to complain that he could now only drink a pint or two before going to bed. This was shortly before he put himself into the restoratory hands of Dr. Schweninger.

"Well, your Highness has changed tremendously since we were at Göttingen. Great heavens! When I think of those days, and the 'beer-journey' we made among the towns and villages of the Thuringian Forest!"

"*Ja wohl*," replied the Prince, "we were conscientious in our tasting of all the seventy different kinds which you will find enumerated by my so-called biographer, Wellmer. But I have learned something in the course of my long life with regard to drinking as well as economic policy. Formerly I conformed to the prevailing taste. As *Fuchs* (freshman) I drank like our Senior, and as Minister I surrendered myself to the leading strings of Delbrück and Camphausen, but now I have emancipated myself in one respect as well as the other. In our potations, no less than in our political economy" [this was said about the beginning of the Prince's "Era of Economic Reform"], "we must forsake the old, beaten paths. . . . I have often said that beer-drinking makes one stupid" [he who drinks beer, thinks beer], "and when I think of my young days, and what I myself did in this respect, I wonder that I am not wholly turned to phlegm.

"Look at one or two of your colleagues—Lasker, for instance; he drinks absolutely nothing, and whenever he wants a little recreation he goes to Pontresina and potters about among the glaciers. How can anything

be made of a little man who leads a life like that? Then, again, take Meyer of Breslau. He was formerly not at all so bad, but now he has become ‘beer-Meyer,’ in theory as well as practice. And what is the result? He has gone over to the Secessionists. It’s a pity, for he has failed in life—like all beer that isn’t drunk; you know the joke?”

“Well, but there is Braun” [of Wiesbaden] “who has also joined the Secessionists” [radically inclined offshoots from the National Liberals].

“Yes, alas! but that he can only have done in a champagne mood; otherwise he is a splendid fellow—quite apart from his *embonpoint*. . . . Just think how he lugged along with him half a dozen Rüdesheimer Berg through the hills of Montenegro—the poor mule that bore him died a week later of sheer exhaustion—and drank brotherhood with Prince Nikita! It’s a positive fact, though the Montenegrin *Gazette* took care to say nothing about it. . . . But now he is *frère et compagnie* with beer-swillers of the worst kind—N——, for example, a beer-genius of folio size. Oh, it’s shameful! And then he had the malice to write this gutter-jingle of me:—

‘*Gefährlich ist der Kürassier,  
Er reitet Schritt und trinkt viel Bier.*

(‘Right dangerous is our Cuirassier;  
He walks his horse and drinks much beer.’)

Well, I do neither one nor the other. But you see what beer-drinking can bring a man to. I assure you that the whole Radical ring is little other than a product of ‘white beer.’ There are some very clever

fellows among them, too, but at present they can do nothing but sit and spout and worry me about my taxation policy. . . . The horror of anything like a tax is simply ridiculous ; and then they are silly enough to imagine that I can abolish an old tax without imposing a new one !

“ But to return to our subject : beer must be made to bleed as well as tobacco—that we owe the public purse as well as the public health. At the present time fifty per cent. of our male population spend their evenings in pot-houses, where they sit swilling beer, smoking cigars and pipes, and abusing the Government, after which they go home with a proud feeling of having done a heavy day's work.”

“ It would be much better,” remarked the Chancellor on another occasion, “ for our people to drink good *schnaps*. Beer only makes them stupid.”

Referring to a proposed new tax on spirits (February, 1889) the Chancellor regretted that this should press heavily on the common labourer, who in cold and wet weather could not possibly do without his *schnaps*, especially in North Germany. Some one mentioned the word tobacco, and Bismarck said, “ Yes, I know many people, especially women, who don't want tobacco ; but *all* want their *schnaps*.”

That he himself had always belonged to the latter category he once illustrated by the following story : “ I am not at all fond of liqueurs and sweet rubbish of that sort ; but at the parties of the late Empress Augusta there was nothing else. Fortunately, among her Majesty's lacqueys there were one or two knowing fellows—one tall chap in particular, who had been in

the artillery—I can see him still. Whenever he came to offer me anything, I winked with my right eye—thus—and when he responded in the same manner with the left, I knew that on this side of his tray I should find a stiff glass of cognac waiting for me.”

On another occasion the Chancellor said he was very fond of a certain kind of Moselle cognac, which he made a point of drinking in order to encourage native industry; and on one of his guests asking whether he didn't prefer French brandy, “No,” replied the Prince, “I am fonder of the Moselle brand, as I don't get it so often.”

“I only hope,” he once said, “that we shall never be like the English, since they have taken to drinking only tea and water,”—a very small proportion of them, surely! Probably, however, the Prince had in his mind's eye the unpleasant spectacle of an English journalist of the Rechabite persuasion, who had, some little time previously, paid him a visit at Friedrichsruh.

And yet, while singing the praises of *schnaps* as a less stupefying liquor than malt, the Chancellor did all he could to encourage the practice of beer-drinking among his own friends. It was verging towards midnight at one of his *soirées*, and the Prince's guests were preparing to depart. But he pressed them to stay, and, drinking up his beer, called for another glass *pour encourager les autres*. The servant brought him some Berlin brew.

“No, no,” he said; “I want Hofbräu” [from Munich].

"Your Highness, the cask is empty."

"Then tap the other one."

"Your Highness, that is empty too"—a reply which was followed by Homeric bursts of laughter among the deputies at their own exceeding thirst.

Some one said of a former President of the Reichstag that he could never fall asleep without reading eleven pages of Goethe ; which made another deputy remark that he, for his part, could never close his eyes before he had drunk fifteen *Seidels* (pints) of beer. And, indeed, under the care of his Schweninger, the Chancellor himself gradually improved his own power of consumption, or at least of absorption, in this respect.

For instance, at one of these beer-evenings, a group of deputies began to discuss the qualities of the Chancellor's huge Reichshund, "Tyras," which was squatting at its master's feet, and one of them remarked that the magnificent animal was by no means the first of its race which had ruled in the Radziwill Palace. To make sure of the point, the deputy went up to the Chancellor, and, thinking that he had heard the previous part of the conversation, begged to know "how many of this sort" he had already had.

"Oh," said the Prince, seizing up his glass of beer and taking a good swig, "this is already my eighth ; but yesterday I managed my twelve pints and felt all the better for them."

The devotion of these dogs to their master was great, in spite of—or, perhaps, even in consequence of—the fact that he sometimes thrashed them severely. Once the painter Lenbach went to call on the Chan-

cellor and found him quite beside himself with rage, and unable to speak. When at last the Prince recovered his power of utterance, he explained that the Reichshund had bitten a little lap-dog belonging to his daughter, Countess Rantzau, and that he had then lashed the animal with a riding whip until he could no longer lift his arm. What with excitement and exertion he had positively lost the use of his tongue. The incident bore out the remark of one who knew him well, that "the Chancellor is of a choleric disposition, the least vexation being apt to provoke him to volcanic outbursts of temper. But the eruption rapidly subsides, and is never succeeded by sulkiness or rancour."

On another occasion Bismarck related that once, sitting at table, he was seized with a kind of choking fit, when his wife came and slapped him on the back with the palm of her hand. Thinking that his beloved master was being ill-used, the Reichshund rushed at the Princess and, raising itself upon its hind legs, seized her by the *coiffure*, and would have thrown her to the ground had he not intervened.

A similar fatality, he said, had seemed to be impending when once he put his arm round his wife's waist to lead off a dance that was given to the younger members of a dinner-party on the anniversary of his escape from the bullet of Ferdinand Blind. Thinking that their master was thus at handgrips with an assailant, the two Realm-hounds began to growl, and were with difficulty kept from springing to his rescue. In the same manner the Prince had saved Gortchakoff (at the time of the Berlin Congress)



from being set upon and worried by "Tyras" when the gouty old Russian Chancellor, on rising from table, had taken hold of his host's arm as a support to the drawing-room.

It was no wonder that once, on a discussion arising at Friedrichsruh as to whether the dog or the horse was the more intelligent animal, the Chancellor stuck up for the former, and supported his theory by several racy anecdotes. The controversy taking a philosophical turn, the Prince—half in jest, perhaps—asked whether it was right to represent man as the lord of creation, and whether more highly developed beings were not conceivable, and might even be in existence in other worlds.

The predecessor of "Tyras" had been "Sultan," and when this favourite Reichshund lay down to die, Bismarck watched beside his poor attendant with such an appearance of sorrow that his eldest son at last endeavoured to lead his father away. The Prince took a few steps towards the door, but on looking back his eyes met those of his old and faithful friend. "No, leave me alone," he said; and he returned to poor "Sultan." When the dog was dead, Bismarck turned to a friend who was standing near, and said: "Those old German forefathers of ours had a kind religion. They believed that, after death, they would again meet in the celestial hunting-grounds all the good dogs that had been their faithful companions in life. I wish I could believe that."

But what Bismarck did believe, he thus expressed to some guests during the Franco-German war:—

"If I were not a Christian, I would not continue to

serve the King another hour. Did I not obey my God and count upon Him, I should certainly take no account of earthly masters. I should have enough to live upon, and occupy a sufficiently distinguished position. Why should I incessantly worry myself and labour in this world, exposing myself to embarrassments, annoyances, and evil treatment, if I did not feel bound to do my duty on behalf of God? Did I not believe in a Divine ordinance, which had destined this German nation to become good and great, I had never taken to the diplomatic trade; or, having done so, I would long since have given it up.

“I know not whence I should derive my sense of duty, if not from God. Orders and titles have no charms for me; I firmly believe in a life after death, and that is why I am a Royalist; by nature I am disposed to be a Republican. To my steadfast faith alone do I owe the power of resisting all manner of absurdities which I have displayed throughout the past ten years. Deprive me of this faith, and you rob me of my Fatherland. Were I not a staunch Christian, did I not stand upon the miraculous basis of religion, you would never have possessed a Federal Chancellor in my person. Find me a successor animated by similar principles, and I will resign on the spot.”\*

\* In the spring of 1870, during a debate in the Reichstag on the abolition of capital punishment, which he vehemently opposed, Bismarck said: “For him who does not believe—as I do, from the bottom of my heart—that death is a transition from one existence to another, and that we are justified in holding out to the worst of criminals in his dying hour the comforting assurance, *mors janua vitæ*; for him, I say, who

For the rest, we had better generalise the Chancellor's religious faith in the words which Lord Beaconsfield puts into the mouth of one of his characters. "‘As for that,’ said Waldersee, ‘sensible men are all of the same religion.’ ‘And pray what is that?’ inquired Prince Florestan. ‘Sensible men never tell.’”

But while claiming to be a thorough Christian, Bismarck was never much of a church-goer; and on the subject of Sunday-observance he had peculiar

does not share that conviction, the joys of this life must possess so high a value that I could almost envy him the sensations they must procure to him. His occupations must appear to him so teeming with promise of reward that I cannot realise to myself what his state of feeling must be, if, believing that his personal existence terminates for ever with his bodily demise, he considers it worth while to go on living at all. I will not in this place refer you to Hamlet's tragical monologue, which sets forth all the reasons capable of inducing him to put an end to himself, but for the contingency of dreaming—perhaps of suffering—after death; who knows what? He who has made up his mind that no other existence succeeds this one can scarcely expect a criminal—who, in the words of the poet, ‘gazes steadfastly into nothingness from the gallows,’ and for whom death is the peace, the slumber yearned for by Hamlet—to carry on the necessary phosphorisation of his brain for any length of time within the narrow limits of a prison cell, bereft of all that lends a charm to existence.” As a supplement to this may be quoted what the Chancellor once said in the Reichstag (October 1878) with reference to the materialistic belief of the party of anarchy: “If I had come to entertain the belief attributed to these men” [the Social Democrats]—“well, I live a life of great activity, and occupy a lucrative post; but all this could offer me no inducement to live one day longer did I not, as the poet” [Schiller] “says, ‘believe in God, and a better future.’”

views. Once (May 1885) in connection with a debate on compulsory Sunday observance (which he refused to advocate in the Federal Council), Bismarck said : " I must say that when I was in England I always had a painful and uncomfortable impression of the English Sunday ; and I was always glad when it was over. I am sure, too, that many Englishmen had the same feeling about it, for they sought to accelerate the march of time (on that day), without witnesses, in a manner which I would rather not characterise, and were overjoyed when Monday dawned. Whoever has lived in English society will understand what I mean. On the other hand, if you go into the country around Berlin, if it does not exactly happen to be near a brewery, and look at the villages, you are pleased with the appearance of the people in their holiday garb, and thank God that we live not under the yoke of an English Sunday."

Reference had been made to Sunday observance in England and America, and to the consequent superiority of these countries to Germany from an industrial point of view. But the Prince contended that this alleged superiority was due to very different causes—in England, more especially, to the fact of its possessing great contiguous stores of coal and iron, and to the further circumstance that it enjoyed a start of several centuries in the race of civilisation. It could be estimated, said the Chancellor, from many indications, that in the time of Shakespeare, or about three centuries ago, there was in England a degree of material comfort, civilisation, and literary development which Germany was then far from possessing.

Germany had been thrown back by the Thirty Years' War more than any other nation. Nevertheless, he could not admit that the English, on the whole, were better Christians than his own countrymen ; and as for Sunday observance, there was a great deal of mere habit in it.

One of the Chancellor's *soirées* towards the end of 1875 was held under the depressing influence of the death of Count Wend zu Eulenburg, who had been engaged to the Prince's only daughter. But the Chancellor had expressed a wish that the deputies would not allow this domestic bereavement of his to interfere with their coming to his reception. In matters of this kind, he said, he took a military standpoint. Up to the funeral he observed strict mourning, but after this he tried to assume a bold and cheerful aspect.

The Chancellor had long been credited with cherishing certain superstitions, such as a belief in ghosts, in the influence of the moon on growth of plants and human hair, in the mystic qualities of numbers, in the unluckiness of doing business on Fridays, and of thirteen sitting down to table. But at Varzin (in 1883) he once remarked to Dr. Busch : " All that nonsense about my superstitiousness has no more solid foundation than mere jokes, or my consideration for other people's feelings. I will make one of thirteen at dinner as often as you please ; and I transact the most important and critical business on Fridays, if necessary."

But with dreams it was otherwise. Whatever the Prince may have privately thought about these him-

self, he evidently deemed that they might be made the means of breaking the opposition, by arousing the fears, of his political adversaries. One evening (May 1872), for example, just at the time when certain of the Chancellor's pet schemes—including a salt-tax—were incurring bitter criticism in Parliament, he gathered around him a group of deputies and told them that he had lately had a frightful dream. While anxiously meditating on the continuance of national unity he had fallen asleep, and then the God of Dreams had come and placed in his hands a map of Germany. This had gradually grown more and more rotten in his grasp, till at last it crumbled away like tinder, and vanished in shreds.\*

At this recital a kind of horror mantled the faces of the deputies, but none of them, said an eyewitness, had the courage, or the presence of mind, to remind the Prince of the poet's words :

*“Ein Traum ist nichts, bedeutet nichts fürwahr ;  
Bewegtes Blut wirft seinen Schaum auf wie  
Bewegtes Wasser.”*

(“A dream is nothing—meaning has it not ;  
Our troubled blood throws up a surface-foam  
Like troubled water.”)

“Bismarck,” remarked another, “underrates the splendour of his own work.” In consequence of this tendency he was prone to dissatisfaction with his own achievements. At the end of his official career he said to some friends at Friedrichsruh : “I have seldom been a happy man. If I reckon

\* On the subject of the Chancellor's dreams, see also p. 74.

up the rare minutes of real happiness in my life, I do not believe they would make more than twenty-four hours in all. In my political life I never had time to have the feeling of happiness. It was continuous fighting and wrestling, and when any success was achieved, then the anxiety not to lose it again, and to find out how to turn it to the best advantage, instantly cropped up. But in my private life there have been moments of happiness. I remember, for instance, a really happy moment in my youth, and that was when I shot my first hare. In later years it gave me pleasure to see my irrigated meadows and plantations thriving, and at home I took pleasure in my wife and children."

Again, at Varzin once, after sitting for some time sunk in profound reflection, he lamented that he had derived but small pleasure or satisfaction from his political activity, but, on the other hand, much vexation, anxiety, and trouble. He had, he said, made no one happy by it—neither himself, his family, nor any one else. "But probably," he continued, "many unhappy. Had it not been for me, there would have been three great wars the less; the lives of eighty thousand men would not have been sacrificed; and many parents, brothers, sisters, and widows, would not now be mourners. That, however, I have settled with my Maker."

How slippery a thing in the eyes of Bismarck peace ever was may be inferred from his reply to a deputy who, at one of his dinners (January 1888), expressed his astonishment at the continued nervousness of the Bourse in spite of the fact that the air had recently

been cleared by the arrival of the Tsar (Peace-Keeper) in Berlin, and by the restoration of cordial relations between the two Empires in consequence of Bismarck's exposure of the famous Bulgarian despatches, which had been maliciously forged with the view of poisoning the mind of Alexander III. against the German Chancellor.

"Well," said Bismarck, "the late events certainly justify the hope that for two or three years there will be no war." But then, correcting himself, "For this year, at least, I think I may safely say." And after a short pause, "On the other hand, it is true, I was equally of the same opinion in the year 1870, and after all it turned out otherwise."

Moltke believed that war, on the whole, was a positive blessing for the human race, and that it would go ill with the world when it ceased to fight. On the other hand, Maurice Jókai once declared that war would never cease on the earth, even if the human race dwindled down to two individuals; and in speaking thus, the Hungarian author but expressed the creed of the German Chancellor. At the proposals of the International Peace and Arbitration Society, Bismarck merely smiled.

Referring, at one of his *soirées*, to a disarmament motion which had been brought forward in the Reichstag (March 1879) by a Würtemberg deputy, Herr von Bühler, Bismarck declared that such a thing was altogether impossible for Germany; at any rate, on account of her geographical position, Germany could never make a beginning. This situation was a very favourable one as far as transit-dues were con-



cerned, but otherwise she was in the disagreeable position of having always to form front on four sides, and of not being able to place implicit confidence in any of her neighbours.\*

The better to enable Germany to form front on two sides at least, if not four, it was shortly after this that Bismarck went to Vienna to conclude the Austro-German Alliance; and then he wrote to his co-negotiator, Count Andrassy: "With regard to the final result of our efforts, we have indeed the satisfaction of knowing that most of the honest people between Aix-la-Chapelle and Mehadia are grateful to us for the service rendered the two great Empires. The fear of war has everywhere made way for the confident hope of peace. But, *si vis pacem, para bellum*; not our good intentions, only our united fighting-forces, are the guarantees of peace. But if the Monarchs and the people are forced to choose between their Army and their Parliamentary orators, it cannot fail in the long run that two-thirds of the people will prove honest, else the machine is wrongly constructed."

\* To Herr von Bühler himself Bismarck wrote: "I am much obliged to you for sending me your disarmament motion. Unhappily, my attention is at present so much engrossed with urgent *practical* business, that I cannot concern myself with a future which I fear neither of us will live to see. It would be only after you had succeeded in gaining over our neighbours to your plan that I, or any other German Chancellor, could undertake, for our ever-defensive Fatherland, the responsibility of any such proposal. But even then, I fear that the mutual control of the nations over the armaments of their neighbours would also be a difficult and slippery matter, and that it would be hard to establish a tribunal which could effectively exercise this control."

It was for reasons similar to those which he had urged against disarmament that Bismarck would never hear of the German army being "reformed," in the Radical sense of the term. In connection with a new Army Bill which was presented to the Reichstag in the spring of 1880, the Chancellor took occasion, at one of his *soirées*, to condemn very strongly the demand of the Opposition for the reduction of the period of active service with the colours from three to two years—a change which was ultimately effected, as far at least as the infantry were concerned, soon after the accession of William II.

In support of his arguments the Chancellor quoted the campaign in Baden, whither some Prussian troops had been despatched in 1848 to extinguish the Revolution which had broken out in that State. The conduct of these troops serving under the two-years' system had made an indelible impression, he said, on the Prince of Prussia, afterwards Kaiser William. Whole battalions had shot away their ammunition without ever so much as touching a single man, and the insurgents had only been put down by the weight of superior but undisciplined numbers. How very different it was on the battlefields around Metz, where the prostrate rows of French grenadiers had testified to the steady, sure aim of the well-drilled Prussian infantry!

On the same occasion the Chancellor told a story referring to the Crimean War. He had been sent to Stuttgart to try to induce King William of Würtemberg to join Prussia in her policy against France (the Western Powers). But this the King refused to do.

Taking a map, he showed how short was the distance, from Weissenburg to Stuttgart, which the French would have to traverse before Prussia could come to his relief. Then, in order to spare his country tribulation, he would have to make his peace with France, seeing that "a shirt is always nearer the skin than a coat."

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## CHAPTER XII.

### ULYSSES AMONG THE SUITORS.

WHEN the Prince celebrated his seventieth birthday (1885), he passed a very high eulogium on the army. On this occasion one very formidable contingent of his congratulators was formed by the *Gens Bismarckiana*, or Clan Bismarck, which had gathered from all parts of Germany to present the illustrious head of their house with an album containing the portraits of all the members of his tribe. The Chancellor said he was glad to see about him so many of those bearing his name in the King's uniform. They had all had the honour and advantage of serving, no less the Markgraves and Electors of Brandenburg than the various Kings of Prussia, as well as the present German Emperor, with feelings of loyalty and obedience ; and as long as the race of Bismarck continued to be represented by such men, it would be well with it. His confidence in the army, he said, was steadfast, and it was this trust which had supported him in the execution of his policy. Thought and action (*Rath und That*) must go hand-in-hand. The army might have had no warlike work to do for the last fourteen years, but still the officers of the German army were the best in the world, and

powerful instruments for preserving peace ; and he was proud to feel that he, too, was a Prussian officer.

On this same occasion Bismarck had expressed a fervent hope that his race would never die out ; and one day in the following spring (1886), as he sat at dinner, he received a telegram announcing that he had become a grandfather by the birth of a first child to his younger son, Count William. Knowing that such an event was impending, the Prince had naturally enough been very anxious to know whether his illustrious race was to be continued in the male line, and his son had equally longed for a boy. But the telegram ran, "Only a girl." Thereupon the Chancellor telegraphed back : "Take comfort. Marie also was only a girl." Marie—now the Countess Rantzau—had been the Prince's first-born child, and she was followed in due course by two brothers.

On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, above referred to, the University of Göttingen—at which Bismarck had resided for several terms—sent him a degree in law by the hands of the Dean of that Faculty ; and after dinner the latter induced his host to talk about his student days. These, he said, had been of a very wild and unprofitable kind. His teachers had inspired him with little interest in the subject of law, and it was only the historian, Heeren, who had to some extent stirred his enthusiasm. So little had his other teachers impressed him that he could recall but the names of two, Hugo, and the Privatdocent, Vallett, who lectured on the Pandects. As for the famous Savigny, he had only been twice to his lectures.

One of his pleasantest reminiscences of Göttingen was connected with the cooling dips which he used to take in the Leine when returning home late at night from the *Kneipe* (beer-house). The little house he lived in on the line of the old wall consisted of but one room, and as he was its sole tenant, without any landlord or landlady to attend to his going and coming, he had always to carry the key about with him in his pocket. His education had been thus one of the most perfect independence. Of work there was but little. At that time it was the custom of the students to spend their holidays at the University, and in his case these had been mainly devoted to drinking and card-playing. With the proctors he had been on a much more intimate footing than with the professors; and when he removed to Berlin, to continue his so-called studies there, he had to undergo a Carcer-sentence that was passed upon him at Göttingen. At that time the academic authorities had sent after him to Berlin a warrant of arrest, and now they had sent him a degree in law.

On the occasion of a subsequent birthday the fighting Corps of Göttingen sent the Chancellor a *silhouette* of himself, dating from his residence at the University. On the back of the picture was inscribed: "Otto von Bismarck, Pommern, *vulgo* Kinds-kopf" [Child's Head], "Hassube, Barribal"—his three Corps nicknames; while underneath were the arms and emblems of the "Hannovera" club, with the mottoes:—*Olim meminisse juvabit*, and *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*. Referring to this latter motto, the Chancellor said, with a chuckle: "Yes, yes, no steps

backward, but many a good zigzag"—a maxim which had enabled him to escape from many a difficulty, including his *Kulturkampf* with Rome, in spite of his proud "*Nach Canossa gehen wir nicht*," as well as his conflict with Spain over the Caroline Islands.

In presenting him with his diploma, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday above referred to, the Dean of the Law Faculty of Göttingen had begged for leave to read aloud to the Chancellor that portion of it which recited his transcendent merits, on which the Prince remarked, with a smile, "Ah! now I see what kind of a man I am." And then to the Dean, "I suppose I can now always address you as colleague?" [*Herr Kollege*].

"I only regret," returned the courtly-witted Dean, "that I myself cannot do the same."

This exchange of compliments recalls another of the same kind. At the time when "little Lasker," the National Liberal chief, used to accept the Chancellor's hospitality, the latter remarked to him one day, half in jest:

"I will lay a wager that we shall one day yet become" [ministerial] "colleagues."

"Indeed?" replied Lasker, with an air of mock seriousness. "Your Highness, then, really thinks of becoming an advocate" [like myself]?

Instead of becoming ministerial colleagues, the two afterwards became such bitter enemies that when Lasker died in the course of a visit to America, and the House of Representatives sent over an address of condolence to the Reichstag, Bismarck refused to be the medium of its presentation, and returned it to

Washington by the hands of the German Minister. Lasker, he said, had embittered his life too much for him (the Chancellor) to become reconciled to the little Jew, even in death.

Bismarck had once said that a man allows himself to talk much more roughly to his wife than to any other ; and it was perhaps on this principle that he always proved himself so brusquely outspoken to the official representatives of America—a country whose independence Prussia had been the first to acknowledge, and which the Chancellor therefore looked upon as in a sense bound to Germany by the ties of political wedlock.\* We have seen how he snubbed the House of Representatives at Washington by returning its Lasker address of condolence ; and about the same time he subjected the United States Minister at Berlin, Mr. Sargent—who had made himself obnoxious in connection with the importation into Germany of American pig-flesh—to such a severe process of bullying at the hands of the Chancellor's minions in the Press, that the Minister had to resign his post and return home.

One of Mr. Sargent's successors—the Hon. W. W. Phelps—also drew down upon himself a quieter kind of snub when, in his official capacity, he made bold to write :—

“DEAR PRINCE BISMARCK [*sic* without the *c*],—

“I have received this morning a dispatch from Mr. Fisher, an important journalist of San Francisco, now in New York, which I take out of cipher and repeat to you :

\* See p. 147.



“ ‘ Prince Bismark is respectfully requested to cable a few words in reference to the following question : What benefit will be derived in your Grace’s opinion from International Expositions ? ’ ”

On the margin of this the Prince simply wrote in pencil, “ None ! ” and refused to be further drawn on the subject.

Bismarck had been equally emphatic when Germany was invited by France to take part in the Universal Exhibition of 1878. Acceptance of this invitation was unanimously negatived by the Federal Council at the instance of the Chancellor, who set forth his views on the subject at one of his *soirées* in a manner as vigorous and characteristic as it was clear.

He was afraid, he said, that German exhibits at Paris would be treated like “ Wagner’s melodies,” which had been hissed ; or like the “ sculptor’s apprentice,” who had been called a “ dog of a German ”—“ *chien d’ Allemand.* ” If this was the way German men and things were treated at Paris at a time when the French Government was doing all it could to make Germany accept its invitation, what would be their lot when they were “ caught fast in the trap of the Exhibition ” ? To participate in this World-Show would evince a lamentable lack of self-respect on the part of Germany as long as she and her sons continued to be the objects of French hatred and contempt.

“ Even if it could be proved that Germany would reap material benefit from the Exhibition, it would be shameless of her to subordinate her honour to her interest ; but, indeed, what or where was the industrial

or other advantage which she had ever gained from her association with such enterprises, whether at Paris, London, Vienna, or Philadelphia (where the 'cheap and nasty' verdict had been pronounced on German goods)? If many of our public prints," concluded the Chancellor, "regard it as a matter of course that we should accept the French invitation, I can only ascribe this partially to the utter lack of thinking power" [*Gedankenlosigkeit*] "with which our Press politicians still continue to follow the French lead, and treat the reading public daily to every French triviality"—a charge which he otherwise formulated as "a total want of political-logic, the craven spirit of diffidence which makes us always still cringe to Paris."

But it was sometimes the turn of Paris, if not to cringe to, at least to take its cue from, Berlin. So at any rate thought Bismarck when he feared that it was the intention of Léon Gambetta to anticipate him in the carrying out of his State-Socialism schemes. In the autumn of 1881 Gambetta made a most mysterious tour in North Germany; but he himself at least afterwards avowed that his only object was to see something of the people who had vanquished France, and especially to make personal inspection of the great Baltic ports. Within a month of his secret visit to Germany, he had formed a French Ministry, and taken to himself the portfolio of Foreign Affairs.

Referring to this event at a dinner to the members of the Federal Council, and to the disquieting number of journalists who had been included in the new French Cabinet, Bismarck remarked that Gambetta,

in the course of his incognito peregrinations, had even passed close to Varzin. He supposed that the great Tribune had really intended to pay him a visit, but abandoned his purpose on learning perhaps, *en route*, from his friends in Paris, that such an act might be misconstrued in France. At any rate, he knew that Gambetta had already begun to make a close study of his (the Chancellor's) schemes of economic reform—State insurance, etc.—and he was afraid that he might even be anticipated in their execution by this French statesman. The Reichstag was indifferent, and even hostile, to these schemes. It was the old, old story of a prophet having no honour in his own country. "It exemplifies anew the German's xenomania" [*Ausländerei*], "his love of everything foreign, his conviction that nothing native can be very good, as expressed in the popular saying : *Das ist nicht weit her*—'Oh, that's no good ; it hasn't come far.' "

Bismarck had already said of Gambetta that he "worked upon the nerves of Europe like a man who beats a drum in a sick room."

Referring, in the previous spring (1880), to the refusal of the French Government to extradite to Russia the Nihilist Hartmann, who had been concerned in a plot to blow up the Tsar Alexander II. near Moscow, Bismarck remarked that however much he abominated such ruffians and their ways, he could not see that the attitude of France in the matter was an incorrect one. In England the very popular Cabinet of Palmerston had fallen when, after Orsini's Opera attempt on Napoleon, it brought in the famous

Conspiracy Bill. In the same manner the young French Republic could not well have acted differently from what it did, if it wished to obviate a similar danger. . . .

“So long as extradition treaties between any two nations did not exist, neither was entitled to complain of the consequences ; and such cases should always be regarded from the domestic point of view of the nation from which the handing-over was demanded. Had he himself been a Russian Minister, he never would have asked for the delivering up of Hartmann, as knowing that the French Government in the circumstances could not comply with his request without offending the Radicals and thus conjuring up internal troubles. The incident,” he concluded, “may produce a little temporary estrangement between the two countries ; but not of a kind to prevent France and Russia from coming together—say in six or seven years—when they think they are sufficiently strong to confront Germany.”

In the light of subsequent events this almost reads like prophecy. For in nine years from this time France and Russia had “come together” at Cronstadt.

Talking of Russia on another occasion the Chancellor said : “I do not believe that the will of Peter the Great is apocryphal. Anyhow, there are still people in Russia who believe in it, and who are always in favour of Russia pushing on towards Western Europe, where she can get nothing but Nihilism and other diseases that are incapable of being cured, even by a ‘Holy Alliance.’ Her task

is in Asia. There, at least, she can represent the progress of civilisation."\*

Russian statesmen took not the least interest in the German Chancellor's schemes of economic reform which had so strongly aroused the interest, and even the suspected rivalry, of Gambetta. The origin of those schemes dated back to the winter of 1874, when Bismarck thus delivered himself at one of his beer-evenings :

"Great things have been accomplished, and I am now beginning to feel *ennuyé*. The German Empire has been re-established. It is recognised and respected by all nations and States. . . . Even if France cherishes ideas of revenge, she will find no ally against us, and without that she will venture nothing. In these circumstances, what remains for me to do? Internal affairs? Well, I am by no means satisfied with them in all respects, and I often think that, if I were to resign, I should get elected to the Reichstag in order to make the life of the Ministers who take my place as unbearable as possible by my opposition. But all these domestic questions—whether I remain in office or join the Opposition—would be very secondary affairs in comparison with what has hitherto been my work.

"Why, therefore, should I not court repose? I am no longer minded to go out shooting on the indifferent

\* Curiously enough, one of William II.'s first acts of courtesy to Nicholas II. was the sending to him of a picture by the hands of his *aide-de-camp*, Colonel von Moltke, entitled, "The Triumph of European Civilisation over East Asiatic Barbarism."

chance of finding game ; for that I am too tired. But if there were any prospect of my falling in with a huge and powerful boar—an Erymanthian one, if you like—I should be up and after him at once, with the old sportsmanlike passion strong within me.

“To place the Empire on a strong and stable financial footing, giving it a dominating position and establishing an organic connection between it and all our public interests in every field of our national life—such is the great and worthy task that could stir me to devote to it the remainder of my failing powers.

“But the task is a difficult one. I am not an expert in these matters, and my present advisers, however capable they may be for current affairs, have no creative ideas. They move along on beaten tracks. Therefore it is that I myself am compelled to cogitate plans of reform, and to choose my instruments for their execution wherever I can find them.”

Four years later the Chancellor varied the simile of the wearied sportsman by saying :

“When a man goes out shooting early in the morning he begins by firing away at all sorts of game, and is quite willing to walk a couple of miles over heavy ground in order to get a shot at some wild fowl. But when he has trudged the livelong day, when his game bag is full, and he is nearing home—hungry, thirsty, covered with dust, and tired to death—all he asks for is rest. He shakes his head when his keeper tells him that he has only a little way to go to get at some birds. But just when ready to drop, the beaters sing out to him their discovery of a couple of splendid

boars, and away at once he starts in pursuit of his tusky prey, with lithesome step and re-awakened zeal."

And so, too, would he (the Chancellor) buckle to his work again with renewed energy, in order to finish what he had taken in hand, if he had but the assistance of the necessary beaters to drive before his gun the running game. By "beaters" the Prince meant a compact and obedient majority in the Reichstag, without which he could do nothing.

"I am not an expert in these matters," the Chancellor had said in the winter of 1874, in allusion to the economic reforms which he then had in view; and even in the spring of 1879—by which time he had presented the nation with a "Christmas card" in the shape of his new protective tariff—he said to a circle of friends at one of his *soirées* :

"Customs policy may be compared with the science of medicine—there is nothing absolute in it. It is only in surgery that medical science has made any progress; pathology has stood completely still. When a patient dies, the doctor comes to the family a few days after to condole with it and remark that the deceased, according to all the rules of science, might well have lived another ten years.

"It is just the same with economics, which admit of no hard and fast rules. According to all the rules of science, France should have bled to death immediately after the war of 1870-71, whereas she has prospered brilliantly ever since; while, on the other hand, England and Germany—who are now both suffering from commercial depression—ought to have been in a flourishing state. From the moment that

America took leave of free trade, it went better with her."

"It is true that formerly I never concerned myself seriously with economic questions, and should not have known what to say had any one asked me as to the state of Swedish iron. I should, in fact, have felt like Rothschild, when once applied to by a business man for his opinion on the same subject. 'Meyer,' said Rothschild, turning, in some embarrassment, to one of his clerks, 'Meyer, what is my opinion about Swedish iron?' But from the time that Delbrück left me, I have had to rely on myself in such things, and have devoted all my spare time to their serious study, so that I have now been able to form my own opinions and conclusions."

In everything he undertook Bismarck was always thorough. Thus it was that, after he had fairly entered on what he called his "Era of Economic Reform," he felt the necessity of acquiring closer touch with the commercial interests of the nation. For this purpose he determined to add the portfolio of Commerce to the posts of Prussian Premier and German Chancellor—which he had often declared to be far above the strength of one man—so as thus to force himself into a practical and profound acquaintance with all the leading questions of the day. On assuming his new office, in January 1881, he invited all the chief officials of his department to dine with him, and these gentlemen he at once impressed with a sense of his special capacity for commerce by telling the following story:—

"One day, when riding out to the Grunewald" [the



Richmond Park of Berlin], "I suddenly came upon a flock of sheep, which looked so well that I drew rein and inquired after their owner. Learning that they belonged to a City Councillor of Berlin I asked the shepherd whether I could buy one of the animals, and on his saying, 'Yes,' I completed the purchase there and then.

"A few days later I happened to be giving a diplomatic dinner, and my Grunewald mutton was placed upon the table. I had told my wife how I had come by it, and I suppose the news must have penetrated to the kitchen. Anyhow the mutton appeared on the *menu* as 'Southdown Bâtard à la Municipal.'

"A little later still I went to dine with the Russian Ambassador, and to my great surprise perceived that his *menu* also included a joint described as 'Southdown Bâtard à la Municipal. At this I could not keep from smiling, and afterwards I learned that the Ambassador's cook had somehow managed to procure a copy of my own bill of fare, and simply copied the description of my Grunewald mutton, without in the least being aware of its particular association with the municipal authorities of our capital."

But *à propos* of his rides in the Grunewald the Prince afterwards remarked, at Friedrichsruh: "Berlin is not the same place to me as it used to be. I don't feel at home there any longer. Forty years ago I used to ride a great deal in and around the city. But as the capital continued to expand, the area of my diversion grew ever more and more contracted, till at last my rides had to be confined to the Thiergarten. I began to feel exactly like a Redskin who has his

happy hunting-grounds taken away from him by the white man, one after the other."

But to return to the dinner which the Chancellor gave to the officials of his new Ministry of Commerce. Over coffee and cigars he remarked, with a laugh, to his guests, "I have come among you like Ulysses among the suitors." There was some smiling at this classical allusion; but a few months later, when the new Minister of Commerce had got rid of some officials whom he looked upon as mere cumberers of the ground, and wasteful consumers of Prussian Penelope's thrifty stores,—it was remembered by these officials, with something very different from a smile, that the Chancellor was a man who was never more serious than when he spoke in jest.

After working for some time at the Ministry of Commerce, the Prince was struck by the insignificance of many of the matters he had to decide. If, for instance, anybody had been caught illicitly hawking goods and sentenced to a fine, but had to be pardoned on the score of poverty, it was necessary, for the remission of the fine, to obtain the consent of two Ministers—the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Commerce. Bismarck had taken special note of a case of this kind. A pedlar had been sentenced to a fine of twenty marks (about a sovereign), and the Under-Secretary of State reported to the new Minister of Commerce that he was a poor devil who had to maintain a wife and child, and would sink into still deeper misery if the fine were converted into imprisonment. He therefore begged Bismarck to sign an immediate report advising the King to pardon the pedlar.

But the Prince emphatically refused to do so. For, said he, if the King had to be advised to use his right of pardon in all such cases, justice would become a dead letter. The pedlar had simply not to pay the fine, and must escape imprisonment in order to save himself and his family from absolute ruin. The Under-Secretary of State then referred to the traditional practice, and appealed to the heart of his chief, who answered, "All right. I'll give the poor devil the twenty marks out of my own pocket. But you shall not have my signature for the thing."

It was from similar motives of philanthropy that the Chancellor about the same time declared, in connection with the Accident Assurance Bill, "I will set my signature to no law which imposes a burden on working men."

In his solicitude for the welfare of working men Bismarck even went the length of declaring himself in favour of the *Recht auf Arbeit*, or the right of every one to get work. "As our law, indeed, at present stands," he said to Dr. Windhorst at one of his *soirées* in 1884, "no one is allowed to die of hunger. If any one comes and says he is willing and able to work, but can find none, we cannot simply leave the man to himself, nor do we do so. That, indeed, would be a desperate state of things. But I think it will be justifiable for us to inaugurate works of public utility to be carried out at the public cost. In this way the assistance we give to the labourer would be worthier and ampler than what he now gets from public alms."

At a dinner (February 1881), which Bismarck gave

to the members of the Economic Council, he placed on his left a wealthy "weaver-master," Hessel, to whom he bemoaned the sadly altered state of the times. "When an artisan," said the Chancellor, "struggles on, his only thought nowadays is how to grow rich; and he becomes less and less animated by pure creative joy and love of his calling. When a man makes money now, honestly or dishonestly, he takes to speculating and finance, and aims at outward show. In former times it was otherwise, and Germany produced men like Krupp, Schwartzkopf, and Egells, who had commenced life as locksmiths, Borsig and Wöhlert as carpenters, Pflug as a cartwright, Heckmann as a coppersmith, Vollgold as a goldsmith, and hundreds of others of a similar kind. These wealthy self-made men were never ashamed of the way in which they began life, but, on the contrary, always proud of it. I only wish our artisans would continue to be animated by the same spirit."

And yet the Prince had once encouraged his own flesh and blood to take to the mere money-making line. When one of his sons was in his sixteenth year, said the Chancellor once, he had pointed out to him the advantage of the wood-industry, saying that, would he but devote himself thereto, he could guarantee that in a comparatively short time he would become a millionaire. "But the youngster preferred to study, and there was an end of the matter." \*

\* The Prince himself always made a very good thing out of his mills at Varzin, which he used for the making of paper out of wood.

At one of the Chancellor's receptions (May 1880) there was some joking at the fact that Count "Bill"—the Prince's second son, lately elected to the Reichstag—had, in the same wilful spirit, voted against some proposal of his father's. But the Chancellor remarked that he had always made a point of allowing his sons perfect independence in all things. Even when they were boys of six—much against the will of their mother—he had never asked them where they were going or what they were doing, but left them entirely to their own devices.

To a deputy who, at the same *soirée*, begged the Chancellor to own that he (the deputy) had not spoken against him that same day in Parliament, the Prince replied, "I would much rather that you had spoken against and voted for me, than held your tongue and joined the Opposition."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### *AILMENTS AND EPIGRAMS.*

IT was about this time (1880) that the Prince complained of being "dead-beat" (*tott-müde*), and his physical decrepitude now became a favourite theme for him to descant upon, especially when he found it necessary to manipulate his parliamentary foes with the prospect of his resignation. During one or two sessions, indeed, his physical ailments compelled him to abstain from attending the Reichstag altogether; and in allusion to one or two written communications from the Prince to the House, one Opposition journal twitted him with having, in a disrespectful spirit of petulance, degenerated into a mere "corresponding member" of Parliament.

"Why," asked the same journal, "could not Bismarck get himself carried into Parliament, as Appian Claudius and the great Earl of Chatham both did?"

To this the Chancellor replied that the Roman Censor was only blind, and the elder Pitt merely afflicted with the gout—ailments which still left to both their victims the use of their tongues; but that his own neuralgic sufferings had positively deprived him of the power of speech.

Already (in 1877) he had said : " If I were only to do half my duty, I should have to work from ten to fifteen hours a day ; and I did so, too, for a long time. But there is a limit to the strength of the strongest, and I can do it no longer."

One day at dinner, a year later, he spoke of himself as " an old man." The Princess interposed, " Why, you are only sixty-three," and he rejoined, " Yes, but I have always lived hard and fast." Then, turning to a guest, " By hard, I mean that I always did what I had to do with all my might ; whatever really succeeded I paid for with my health and strength."

" *Patriæ inserviundo consumor*" was a favourite motto of the Chancellor, which he once wrote in an album. " I have often thought of writing my memoirs," he said at one of his *soirées* in 1877, " but I have really no time to do so . . . and I fear I shall not be able to hold out much longer at my post : the air here" [in Berlin] " doesn't agree with me. At Varzin, where I spend from six to eight hours daily in the open air, I always feel much better ; but here it is all over with me again. I can never get to sleep before five o'clock in the morning, and it is often six or seven. But then I sleep till noon. Till five I lie awake, recalling all the unpleasant things that have occurred to me during the past thirty years—which all come up again before my mind in the gloomiest form."

One of his hearers advised him to try mountain air.

" Oh, that would never do. I should be bothered to death by tourists. I should never be able to be alone—that is only possible at Varzin. There I feel

well, as I have known every tree from its youth. The woods refresh me. I ought to have been a forester."

And again: "I always feel best when in greased boots—away from civilisation. . . . My spirits are always highest where I can hear nothing but the woodpecker."

Once, in connection with the subject of fishing, Bismarck enumerated all the brooks and burns in Pomerania and the Mark of Brandenburg which contained trout. He himself, he said, had once at Varzin caught a trout weighing eleven pounds.

The sight of nature made him happiest, and inspired him with his finest thoughts. Thus it was that his features assumed that nobly serious and almost prophetic expression which marks his portrait by Lenbach—one of the best extant. "We were engaged in conversation," said the Prince to a friend, "and I happened to look upwards at a passing flight of birds. Suddenly Lenbach exclaimed, 'Hold hard! That will do capitally. Keep quite still!' and so forthwith made the sketch"—which is regarded as betraying more of the inner soul of the man than any other portrait of the Chancellor.

It was this same yearning after solitude which caused the Chancellor to take special precautions for shielding himself from impertinent curiosity in the spacious garden, or park, behind the Radziwill Palace in the Wilhelm-Strasse. He had been compelled, he said, to run a wall all round the garden, and even screen it off from view at some exposed points by the erection of canvas curtains on the top of the wall, as one house in the Königgrätzer Strasse which dominated his private domain had been let to



Englishmen, who would sit at the windows for hours at a time and scrutinise all his doings in the most impertinent manner with their field-glasses.

Some years later (1884) he remarked, with a smile : " I have ceased to be an individual, and have become an event. Whenever I make my appearance in the streets my ear is at once struck by the clattering" [*Klipp-Klapp*] " footsteps of hundreds of people following at my heels. How happy I am at Varzin, where I can take a solitary walk for miles, and often without being recognised ! "

On returning to Berlin from Varzin in the winter of 1882 his friends scarcely knew the Chancellor again, for he had meanwhile grown a full beard, which completely spoilt the impression of his massive, martial features. He had done this, he said, as a possible remedy against the acute neuralgia to which he had become a victim. It was only when he had enjoyed a full meal that his facial pains ceased, and these were sometimes so vehement as to cause him to stop in the middle of a sentence.

Daily almost he got prescriptions and medicaments sent him by unknown admirers and sympathisers in England, and some of these he had tried—with temporary success. But in the long run it was just the same with all these nostrums as with scarecrows—which frightened away the birds for a few days, and then the latter came back as boldly as ever. " At Varzin, I can pull a fur cap over my ears, but here in Berlin I can't do that without attracting a crowd of boys and becoming a kind of ' Papa ' Wrangel. Therefore I long for the day when I shall be able to resume

a decent appearance, for I am not at all pleased with my beard, and my wife still less."

In the course of further conversation the Prince complained that his previous tastes had all left him. Formerly he had still believed that, in the worst of cases, he would get himself rolled along in a Bath chair, like an English Admiral afflicted with the gout, in order to have a shot at a covey of partridges; but for the last half-dozen years he had lost all his love of shooting, while even the biggest stag and heaviest boar had now little or no attraction for him. Whenever he took his stand for a *battue* at Varzin, his only wish was that the thing would soon be over; and it was the same with riding. Perhaps even with politics that would soon also be the case.

In pursuance of the same theme the Chancellor came to speak of the Emperor. "His Majesty," he said, "holds up bravely, in spite of his sorrow for the death of his brother" [Prince Charles]. "All of us together haven't got nerves like the Kaiser's; or rather, I should say that, in spite of his incessant labours and working from morning to night, the Emperor has no nerves at all. It is a real blessing that he wears so well, that Moltke is ever fresh, and that Kameké" [Minister of War] "is still so tough. We civilians are no good, for we are always complaining of this or that, so that when we grow in years we have no dearer thought in the intervals of our work than how to get away from it at the best opportunity."

Bismarck was never tired lauding the constant considerateness of the Emperor to all about him, especially towards himself; and the Chancellor on

his part lost no opportunity of returning these attentions. The question having once arisen at one of his parliamentary dinners how far modern historians should be allowed the run of the State-archives, the Prince declared himself in favour of their use in the most liberal manner, though on condition, of course, that writers would spare the personal feelings of the Emperor—especially with regard to his Majesty's father (Frederick William III.).

On another occasion, when lauding the old Emperor's endurance and devotion to duty, the Chancellor said he had noticed that, ever since he was wounded by Dr. Nobiling, his Majesty had grown fresher, both in mind and body. He could only account for this by supposing that the copious loss of blood from which the Kaiser then suffered had produced the same favourable effect upon his system as was sometimes observable in patients for whom the doctors used to prescribe phlebotomy.

It was about the same time that Bismarck told the story of his first meeting with Kaiser William. This was at the house of Prince August of Prussia, and the future German Emperor had asked him how it came that a tall, strapping fellow like him had taken to law instead of to a military career. To that Bismarck had replied that he was no longer a stripling of from fifteen to eighteen, when every young man wanted to be a soldier ; apart from which, his parents had been against his adoption of the career of arms.\*

\* When once acknowledging a birthday present from the Emperor, in the shape of a miniature replica of Rauch's celebrated equestrian statue of Frederick the Great, Bismarck

What a difference between the tall, strapping youth who had then moved the recruiting passion of the Prince of Prussia, and the weary giant who now so frequently complained to the Emperor about the woeful falling-off in his physical powers!

"Tut!" said his Majesty one day. "Look at me. I am a much older man than you are, Bismarck, and yet I am still able to ride."

"Ah, yes," rejoined the Chancellor; "but then your Majesty must remember that a rider always lasts longer than his horse." \*

In witty repartee of this kind Bismarck always excelled. Thus, at one of his *soirées* (December 1876), there was much talk about the new Judicature Act, to many of the clauses of which, as approved by Parliament, Bismarck would on no account agree.

wrote to his Majesty: "I have always regretted that my parents never allowed me to testify my attachment to the Royal House" [of Prussia], "and my enthusiasm for the greatness and glory of the Fatherland in the front rank of a regiment rather than behind a writing-desk. And even now, after being raised by your Majesty to the highest honours of a statesman, I cannot altogether express a feeling of regret at not having been similarly able to carve out a career for myself as a soldier. Perhaps I should have become a useless General, but had I been free to follow the bent of my own inclination I would rather have won battles for your Majesty than diplomatic campaigns."

\* Ten years previously Bismarck had said to his friend and colleague—Roon, the War Minister—who claimed to be the shield on which he (the Chancellor) was uplifted: "My strength has been over-strained. The King, as rider in the saddle, is scarcely aware of how, in me, he has ridden a good horse to pieces. It is the lazy ones that last longest; but *ultra posse nemo obligatur*."

"But, your Serene Highness," threw in a Bavarian deputy, "the wisest ever gives way."

"I have been the wisest long enough," replied the Chancellor, "and now it is your turn."

In the autumn of 1886, Bismarck and M. de Giers, the Tsar Peace-keeper's penman, met at Franzensbad; and after lunching together they presented themselves on the balcony of the hotel, when they were enthusiastically cheered by the "cure-guests."

"That is meant for your Serene Highness," said the Russian Minister.

"No," replied the German Chancellor; "they are cheering our alliance" (which could not have been very much of an alliance in view of the Triple Pact to which Russia was not a party).

Again, at the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new Imperial House of Parliament, the Russian General, Prince Dolgoruky, could not help expressing his admiration of Bismarck's full-dress cuirassier uniform; and he asked what his trousers were made of.

"*Ils sont de peau*" [pigskin], replied the Prince.

"And do you wear these also in time of war?"

"*Je ne sais pas : nous ne faisons plus de guerre*"—"I don't know : we have done with war."

On another occasion, about the same time, some one asked Bismarck whether it was really true, as popular rumour had it, that he was going to visit Germany's new colonial field of enterprise in South-West Africa.

"Yes," replied the Prince; "but only on the back of the camel that brought this piece of news."

"And how stands it, then, with the Egyptian question, your Serene Highness?" asked a prominent financier of the Chancellor, on whose good-nature he thought he could presume to get a tip or two for the money-market.

"I really don't know," answered the Prince, "for I haven't seen to-day's newspapers yet."

At epigram, too, the Chancellor was always just as good as at repartee. Thus, at an evening reception given by the French Ambassador, M. de Gontaut-Biron, Bismarck, in his cuirassier uniform, with helmet in hand, was standing chatting with the military *attaché*, Prince Polignac, when four dapper little Japanese diplomatists entered the *salon* with a rather shy and overwhelmed air. They had previously been dining with the Chancellor himself, who now observed: "*Ce sont des petits hommes, mais des hautes personnalités.*"

It was in the same pungent spirit of antithesis that Bismarck, when at Frankfort, had addressed his excellent French cook, whom he was at last obliged to dismiss for plunder and peculation of the worst kind: "*Je regrette beaucoup de ne pas pouvoir vous garder, mais malheureusement mon budget n'est pas à la hauteur de vos talents.*"

Speaking about the various legislative bodies at Berlin, Bismarck once remarked to a deputy that the Reichstag (Imperial Parliament) was distinguished by a higher tone than the Landtag (Prussian Parliament). "The Lower Chamber" [of the latter] "can drink champagne, but cannot pay for it; the Upper Chamber can pay for it, but cannot drink it; while the Reichstag, killing two birds with one stone, can both drink

and pay for it"—an apologue which reminded one of the saying that France had colonies, but no colonists; Germany plenty of colonists, but no colonies; while England had both colonies and colonists.

In the endeavour to procure colonies for her colonists, Germany had had a very serious lovers' quarrel with her cousin, England; and Bismarck was strongly of opinion that, in the maintenance of this quarrel, Count Münster, the Ambassador in London, had shown a lamentable lack of energy and penetration—for which the penalty was his prompt transference to Paris. "*Eine lange Laterne ohne Licht*," was how the Prince hit off the character of this supine subordinate—"a tall lamp-post without any light"; though this apparent absence of informatory flame at the London Embassy may, possibly, have been only due to the fact that the Count had a habit of shedding his illumination on the wrong objects and in the wrong place.

Among the Chancellor's epigrams may be quoted the following. In the album of a lady of title Count Moltke had written the words, "*Schein vergeht, Wahrheit besteht*"—"Falsehood passes away, but Truth endures"; and immediately underneath this reflection Bismarck inscribed the following quatrain:—

*"Ich glaube dass in jener Welt  
Die Wahrheit stets den Sieg behält;  
Doch mit der Lüge dieses Lebens  
Kämpft unser Marschall selbst vergebens."*

Which may be rendered:—

"Believe I do that, beyond the grave,  
Truth always will her banners wave;  
But with the falsehoods of this life  
E'en Moltke must wage bootless strife."

While freely admitting that "*la comparaison n'est pas la raison*," Bismarck frequently betrayed a truly poetic faculty in clothing his ideas with the rich and attractive robes of concrete images; and some of his similes, metaphors, and instances, in their telling aptness, were quite worthy of Shakespeare. But never did he make a neater comparison than when, on being shown the Edison phonograph at Friedrichsruh (October 1889), he said it struck him almost like a realisation of the story in Baron Münchhausen, where a trumpet-tone suddenly became congealed in the horn, and afterwards began again to thaw into sound. Only Edison excelled Münchhausen in this respect, that his melodies could be heard, not once, but a thousand times over.

The Prince was more than delighted with the invention, pronouncing it (in English) to be a "clever instrument," and one which must have cost its inventor more than a world of pains. With incredulous wonder he listened to its repetition of several operatic airs and military marches. He himself spoke into the apparatus a few verses of his favourite, "In good old colony times,"\* a quatrain of "*Gaudeamus igitur*," and a strophe or two of Uhland's "*Als Kaiser Rothbart lobesam*"—all of them lyrics which he had sung with Motley, the countryman of Edison, in the old student days at Göttingen.

\* See p. 72.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### *A "CRACK" WITH CRISPI.*

IT is a pity that an Edison phonograph was not always placed in front of the Prince when entertaining guests at Friedrichsruh, for then we should have had an accurate record of some of his most entertaining conversations. But even without the aid of this marvellous device for bottling up and preserving human speech in the interest of future generations, we have a most charming account of a typical example of the Chancellor's table-talk at his Tusculum in the Sachsenwald.

In the autumn of 1887 Signor Crispi, Italian Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, journeyed from Rome to Friedrichsruh to confer with the German Chancellor on the European situation in the light of the Triple Alliance. The two statesmen had not seen each other since 1877, when they met at Gastein. Crispi's first meal at Friedrichsruh was supper, at which Count Herbert Bismarck, Dr. von Rottenburg, and Dr. Schweninger, were also present.

The conversation of the Chancellor and his Italian visitor first turned on the rapid lapse of the years.

"Ah yes," exclaimed the Prince, with a sigh of

resignation ; "but the main thing is to use one's time well."

Suddenly the conversation, at some remark of the Chancellor, soared into the region of *la haute politique*.

"What now remains of the treaties of 1815?" asked Crispi. "Nothing!"

"And as far as I am concerned," said the Prince, "I have helped to wipe them out completely."

"What remains of the treaty of 1856" [Paris]? "Nothing, or next to nothing. Declarations of principle as to blockades. And the treaty of 1878—the Treaty of Berlin itself,—has it not already received several rents? Is it not already in tatters?"

"Yes," admitted Bismarck ; "but by preserving those tatters we can maintain the peace."

Then the Chancellor went on to describe the appearance of his mansion at Friedrichsruh, before the Emperor presented him with the Sachsenwald.

"This change of proprietorship was by no means calculated to please the people of the neighbourhood, who were accustomed to feel themselves at home in this sequestered spot" [the mansion had been used as a sylvan restaurant]. "And even when I and my family had become installed here, these people continued—such the power of habit—to roam about as before. Our presence did not incommode them in the least. I had not yet raised the wall which skirts and screens off my estate on the railway side, and so they came and wandered around the house as formerly. Indeed, they were not very far from asking me to let them rooms. Some of them came

and flattened their noses on the windows of my study, in order to see what I was about, as I was of course the main object of their curiosity, or if you like, their interest. My God! When a man has been to the wars and seen camp-life, he is not easily shocked, and would not hesitate to change his shirt in the presence of ten thousand people. But here at Friedrichsruh I did not feel comfortable in the midst of all this public inspection, and things even that didn't bother me might readily have proved unpleasant to the ladies, so that I had at last to wall myself off from intruders."

Next morning at lunch, Bismarck, pointing to some very fine potatoes cooked in the English manner said to his neighbour :

"Do you know what these are called with us?"

"Potatoes, are they not, your Highness?"

"Yes; but they are also called Pomeranian bananas. You don't know them by this name, do you?"

"No; but these potatoes produce very fine grenadiers."

"Ah, yes, that they do. But, nevertheless, this Schweninger of mine here won't let me eat any of them. Ach! The wicked Doctor!"

"*Sit modus in rebus!*" pleaded the Chancellor's body-physician.

A dish of macaroni, in honour of the Prince's Italian visitors (for Crispi had brought several secretaries with him), was now passed round; and Crispi expressed his surprise that Dr. Schweninger should allow his illustrious charge to indulge in such farinaceous food.

"Oh," said the Chancellor, with a laugh, "if I were to follow the advice of Schweninger, he would do with me as his colleague did with Sancho Panza, Governor of the island of Barataria. He forbids me the macaroni, but I eat it all the same."

On the table were also some of those pickled herrings which once, for several weeks at a time, had formed the Chancellor's sole diet; and now he pressed his visitors to taste them.

"But their true flavour," he said, "only comes out when you eat them with butter and Pomeranian bananas."

The talk then came to be of French and Italian wines, Crispi praising those of Syracuse, and saying that he would send some specimens to the Princess, as this was really a ladies' taste.

The Prince said he was well acquainted with the north of Italy, where he had made his honeymoon trip in 1847. He had then seen Milan, Genoa, and Venice, in which latter place he forgathered with his own Sovereign, Frederick William IV.

As the Chancellor called these cities by the Italian form of their names, some one asked him whether he could speak the language.

"*Un poco*," he replied. "Enough at least to read and understand a newspaper. I know a certain number of elementary words, but I cannot manage the moods and the suffixes. For example, I know the verb *leggere*, but I doubt if I could go through all the tenses and persons: *io leggo, tu leggi. . .*."

The Chancellor kept turning every now and then from his guests to his dogs, to which he heaved bits

of bread, but also tantalised them by retaining in his hand the bits that he pretended to throw.

On this, some one remarked that the same thing was often observable in politics—many a statesman having thus played fast and loose with a State; and indeed, it might have been added that this was precisely the game which Bismarck himself had played with Napoleon and Benedetti in respect to Belgium and other territorial “objects of compensation.”

At dessert the Italians were amazed at the magnificence of the fruit that was handed round,—pears, apples, and grapes such as they had never even seen in their own country—*magna parens frugum*.

“These grapes,” said the Prince, “are a present from the Rhine. A man in my position often gets many such gifts—quite disinterested ones, too. I must accept them. What else can I do? If I were to refuse them, I should only upset and insult their donors.”

On coffee being served, Dr. Schweninger, who had been rather infected by his patient's tendency to paradox, observed that a man in good health ought to be able to manage a dozen *petits verres* of cognac a day, though the number might vary with climate and latitude. As for himself, he would honour the Prince's brandy, though not perhaps to this extent.

Hereupon the Chancellor begged for medical permission to drink a glass of cognac in honour of Signor Crispi. The occasion was a too rare and felicitous one for him to be deprived of this pleasure.

Dr. Schweninger looked as if he rather doubted the wisdom of his patient doing this.

'It is always so,' remarked the Chancellor, as he tossed off the forbidden liquor; "the Doctor is afraid that there won't be enough left for him. But he needn't worry. There will be abundance for him, even if he lets me have my share. I have still four hundred bottles of the same brand, and it is very old."

"Will you have a cigar?" finally said the Prince, handing a box of Havanas to the Italian Premier. "What? You neither drink nor smoke? What a singular being you must be!"

The Italian visitors noticed that the matches seemed to be specially made for the Chancellor, being very long and broad, so that they could be thrust deep into his pipe, which was of unusual dimensions. The Prince explained that he never smoked in the forenoon. He always wore long cravats of white muslin or black silk, wound several times round the neck, with which, as he laughingly said, he had been "on a war footing these fifty years, for they have never fitted well." In 1857, he said, he had written from Paris to his sister: "I have eleven large mirrors, and my cravat still sits badly nevertheless. The knot persistently refuses to keep in its place, and always shifts to one side. As one must account for all things, I explain this on the theory that my head moves in one direction more than in the other."

The Prince remarked that he had grown a beard several times, but his wife did not like it, and insisted on his shaving. "I yielded," he said. "And yet it was so convenient!"

On the Princess remarking, "It was convenient,

perhaps, but abominable, and did not become you in the least," he rejoined, "Abominable or not, you would have done as I did—sacrificed this ornament on the altar of domestic peace."

The same night there was a more ceremonious family dinner in honour of Crispi and the Italian Ambassador, Count de Launay, who had meanwhile arrived at Friedrichsruh from Berlin to take part in the serious political business of the meeting. Crispi led the way into the dining-room with the Princess on his arm, while there was some hesitation among the others as to who should follow next.

"*Circulez, messieurs, circulez!*" urged the Chancellor, "as the police say in Paris."

At one end of the table the talk began to be of German literature and its lights. Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing were in turn discussed, and one of the Italians declared himself to be a great admirer of Jean Paul Richter.

"Ah, but he is now little read in Germany," remarked the Prince from the other end; and then, by some curious association of ideas, he went on to say:

"Gentlemen, I have a regular itching to abuse Boulanger to you." But the rest of his remarks were lost, and he proceeded to speak of the last representative of French imperialism.

"Napoleon," he said, "was not a bad fellow; he meant well."

Crispi remarked that he had no strength of will; that his policy was at once "deliberate and chimerical, complicated and naïve." While believing that he

was working towards a good end, he suppressed all freedom in France, and kept Europe for twenty years long under the menace of undefined and precarious intentions. Wishing to exalt his country, he only led it to catastrophe and ruin.

"He was ignorant," struck in Bismarck, "and it was with some surprise that I came to this conclusion, seeing that he had been educated at a German Lyceum, and in his time the teaching in Germany was of a very thorough and excellent kind. He was badly up in history, with the exception of that of the first Empire, and even with that he was acquainted only in its own way—that is to say, as a glorification of the first Napoleon and as a prologue to the restoration of the Empire. In geography and history he was ill-versed. People have paid his intellect too much honour and his heart too little."

The Chancellor then went on to speak of the sad international position of Prussia at the time of the Congress of Paris.

"Prussia," he said, "stood very low then. Not only had she, in 1850, stomached the humiliation of Olmütz, and not only was her *rôle* in Germany equal to zero, as Austria and the other States had entered into a conspiracy against her, but in the following years she had also inspired the rest of Europe with distrust, and had on the whole emerged from the Eastern crisis connected with the Crimean War with diminished prestige. Austria had proposed the admission of Prussia to the conferences at Paris, but this proposal was not seriously supported by Austria, and positively resisted by England. In fact



there was a time, at the beginning of February 1856, when Prussia's efforts to gain access to the Congress might be regarded as a failure. Baron von Manteuffel, who, as our Foreign Minister, represented Prussia at the Congress, had to put up with many a snub. He was obliged to dance attendance in the ante-chamber of the Congress after the other plenipotentiaries had already begun their deliberations; and it was only on the insistence of Napoleon that he was admitted to the sittings. If I had been in Manteuffel's place, I should not have put up with it, but withdrawn; and indeed, that would have been much better for us, for, had we not signed the treaty, we should have had a much freer hand afterwards."

Here a splendid saddle of venison was brought in.

"Is this from your own preserves?" asked Crispi.

"No," replied the Prince. "I do not care about shooting my own deer."

"Well, at any rate, it seems to be very well cooked."

"Ah, yes; French *cuisine* on the whole is excellent, but French cooks don't understand the preparation of such large joints. A special art is necessary for that, and they don't possess it. You see, if venison is to be properly enjoyed, one must not be impatient with it, and that is just what the French are. You must know how to wait. You never get the full flavour out of fresh venison: it must hang till it becomes tender. That saddle there has been hanging a fortnight, and you will find that this is a great improvement. French cooks fancy that it is enough to beat meat well until it grows tender; but that won't do."

And then, after a thoughtful pause :

"Yes, that is perhaps part of the national character. The French are fond of beating" (*klopfen*). And then, with a look at Schweninger : "There is always something of the priest in doctors, for they are fond of doing themselves what they deny to others. Maraschino is an Italian liqueur, is it not? What is it made of?"

"Of a kind of wild cherry," replied one of the Italians, "which grows in Dalmatia, and is called *marasca* in the local dialect. The best of it comes from Zara."

Here the Chancellor proceeded to amuse the company with the story of one of his old colleagues in the Prussian Cabinet who was at once the overseer of the royal forests and the royal farms—two totally different departments.

"The Administration of the forests was in a state of constant litigation with that of the farms, but the Minister alternately signed every document for or against each department, and without ever so much as reading them. But even if he had perused them, that would not have made the least difference—he would have signed them all the same."

Before the company rose, Crispi remarked that it was probably unique in history—this spectacle of a father and son thus conducting the diplomacy of a State, as was the case with the Prince and his presumptive successor, Count Herbert.

"Not at all," replied the Chancellor. "Pray think of the elder and the younger Pitt."

"Ah, yes, but that was something quite different."

"Well, I don't know," rejoined the Prince. "There was certainly a resemblance between their political activity and ours, for they had always to be on the watch against France."

In the following autumn (August 1888)—the year of William II.'s accession—Signor Crispi returned to Friedrichsruh, where he again received the warmest of welcomes, the company asked to meet him this time including Count and Countess Rantzau, the Chancellor's son-in-law and daughter. And again the first meal was supper.

First of all the talk was of meal-times, and one of the Italians reminded the Chancellor of the French maxim, "Rise at six, breakfast at ten, dine at six, and go to bed at ten--and you will live to the age of ten times ten."

"During my life," said the Prince, "I have seen the dinner-hour gradually changed from four to five, from five to six, from six to seven, and from seven to eight."

Then the conversation drifted to the subject of Italy.

"The Italians," said the Chancellor, "grow excellent wines and drink little of them, especially the Southerners. It is just the same with the Hungarians, who have fire enough already in their blood. But as for us denizens of the North—we require a little artificial excitement now and then. In France there is a saying, 'As drunk as a Switzer'; and in this respect we Northerners are often like the Swiss."

"Excuse me, your Highness," ventured one of the Italians, "does the French saying not run, 'To drink like a Switzer, and be drunk like a Pole'? For

it is characteristic of the Swiss that they can stand much wine."

"*Ja, Ja,*" rejoined the Prince, "you are doubtless right, "and we feel that we are pretty much like the Swiss."

Some one referred to Garibaldi, on which the Chancellor gave them to understand that he had but little admiration for the Italian hero.

"Oh, but," put in Crispi, "he was a lion in battle. He was also an excellent General, and very resourceful in action. As a politician and parliamentarian, he didn't perhaps amount to much. Your Highness remembers how he behaved after the French War?"

"*Ach, ja* ; but the French paid him well back. He was laughed at by the Assembly at Bordeaux."

At dessert again the Italians could not help admiring the magnificence of the fruit on the table, and asked whether, as in the previous year, he had received it as a gift from the Rhine.

"No ; that is from Hamburg," explained the Princess.

"Rarely, even in Italy, do we see such fruit."

"Well," said the Prince, "that must be because you don't do enough to help nature. Providence has been very kind to you, but you are accustomed to its bounties and do nothing to improve upon them. With us, industry must seek to make up for the failings of nature—warmth, for instance. The climate is inclined to deny us fruit, but we secure it by labour. Look at Belgium and Holland : don't you witness there the finest flowers in all the world?"

"Here is a specimen of the fruit we get from

Italy," broke in the Princess, pointing to some peaches. "What do you call these?"

"In Piedmont they are called *persi patanii*, or naked peaches, in the local dialect."

"Are they not called *brignoni*?" inquired the Chancellor.

The Italians now remembered to their shame, what in fact they had forgotten, that this indeed was the usual name of the fruit.

The conversation then fell on Bordeaux wines, the Prince remarking :

"The English simplify matters. To them the human body consists of only four or five parts—or at least they only make mention of as many. In the same way, all Bordeaux wines are only 'claret' to them, and all Rhine wines 'Hock.'"

From wine to tobacco the transition was natural, and the Chancellor proceeded to describe the effect of nicotine on his own organism. This was of a twofold character. First of all, tobacco to him was a narcotic and calmed his nerves; for, as a matter of fact, the less he smoked the more nervous he became. Then again, the mechanical inhaling and exhaling of the smoke had a tranquillising effect. The involuntary watching of the smoke diverted him. In business conversation, too, you had time to reflect. How could any one let himself be carried away by passion with such a thing as a pipe in his hand? Napoleon III. was a great smoker, though only of cigarettes.\*

\* Compare this expression of the Chancellor's homage to "My Lady Nicotine" with his remarks on the same subject to Jules Favre, p. 204.

"He was not lacking in intelligence," went on the Chancellor, "but this intelligence wanted edge. He possessed a source of great power—an unshakable belief in himself, in his star. He deemed himself equal to anything, and brooded over the most fantastic schemes. One day he said to me: 'What would you do if we were to occupy Belgium? Would you declare war?' I replied: 'No, perhaps not.' 'But what, then, *would* you do?'—'Well,' I said, 'we should look for our Belgium elsewhere.' The only men of considerable importance in the Second Empire were Morny, Drouyn de Lhuys, and Thouvenel."

"Yes," remarked Crispi, "and after Morny died, things began to go to the bad. Death deprived the Emperor of a devoted counsellor, who had become as cautious as he had formerly been bold. Has your Highness read Emil Ollivier's book about the Papacy? A poor performance!"

"No, I haven't read it—fortunately. A few years ago I got a letter from Ollivier—I forget what was the occasion of it—but he wrote me in a way which did not at all please me. I replied in a dry and disagreeable manner, and that was the last of our correspondence. My letter was something like this: 'Sir, if in the course of my life I had had the misfortune to do as much harm to my native country as you have done to yours, I should have believed that my days would not be long enough to pray to God for forgiveness, etc.'"

"And Gramont?"

The Chancellor reflected a little.

"Well," he then said, "he was a good sportsman."

But he ought to have got himself killed. With his fine build and figure, his proper place in 1870 should have been in a squadron of cuirassiers. But even in the days of its decline the Empire had at least one man of talent ; only he wasn't made any use of. He had been a journalist and deputy, and been mixed up in some ugly law-suit or other—wait a moment ! Surely there was a Camille in his name—Du Camille, or something of the kind. Ah, yes, I have it now ; Clement Duvernois.

“ In 1871 I had some dealings with him. While treating for peace with Thiers and Favre on one hand, on the other I entered into negotiation with the Empress-Regent by means of Duvernois. Once, when Thiers was proving very recalcitrant, I said to him : ‘ In Germany we have a French army of 200,000 prisoners. What would you say if I were to conclude peace with Napoleon, and restore him the 200,000 soldiers who are now with us ? What would become of your Republic then ? ’

“ He bounded up. ‘ Do that, would you ? ’ he exclaimed.

“ ‘ Why not ? ’ said I. ‘ The Republic has not been recognised yet. For us the Emperor is still the legitimate Sovereign of France. ’ Thiers began to reflect, and he now became more pliable.

“ But I was speaking about Duvernois. Well, we had only just come to an agreement with Thiers when Duvernois returned with the offer of concessions from the Empress. At first, too, she would on no account hear of yielding us an inch of territory, but at last she gave way, though too late.”

The conversation then turned to the campaigns of 1866 and 1870-71, the Prince repeating what he had said to Crispi in the previous year, that "Prussia did not wish for war. But we were prepared for it all the same. We all knew that a war with the French would one day be inevitable. They had beaten the Russians in the Crimea, the Austrians in Italy, and now it was going to be our turn. The war on the Rhine was a certainty—the more so as we had been victorious at Sadowa. In 1867, when I accompanied the King to Paris to see the Exhibition, I made the acquaintance of a Marshal of France—Vaillant or Raudon, I think the name—who was Governor of Paris. We were chatting away, and he said to me, 'One day yet we shall cross bayonets.'

"'All right,' I replied, 'if you insist upon it. But may I ask you why?'

"'Because,' he answered, 'we are both cocks, and because one cock doesn't like to hear another crowing louder than itself. At Sadowa you crowed too loudly.'"

In some connection or other the conversation then turned to the subject of baldness, about which the Chancellor expressed himself in a very forcible manner. "Some men grow grey," he remarked, "and others bald"—he himself belonging to the latter category like the man who, in this respect, preferred death to dishonour.

"Moltke," he said, "wears a wig which deceives nobody. If I wore a wig I should indulge in all my humours, and wear wigs of all kinds—long, short and middle-sized, fair and brown. In my eyes a wig is simply a hood of hair, instead of wool, silk, or cotton.



I should therefore wear my wig as a hood ; and there are hoods of different kinds, some warmer and others lighter. There was a time, indeed, when I really did make up my mind to wear a wig. That was at St. Petersburg. My excuse was the cold. At a temperature of twenty-five to thirty degrees (Réaumur) below freezing point, I had sometimes to stand bare-headed, with scarcely more hair on my head than I have now. This nuisance recurred annually at the blessing of the Neva. Others had worn wigs before me, and so I got one. At a review at Warsaw before the Tsar Alexander II. and the Prince Regent of Prussia, afterwards the Emperor William I., I had to appear in a military uniform. A helmet is a bad protection against both heat and cold, so I resolved to put on my wig. We were galloping in the retinue of the Princes when a General beside me looked at me and said, half chaffingly, 'What, are you wearing a wig?' 'Is it visible?' I replied. 'Yes, devilish distinctly. It's slipping down on one side.' And so it was. The carriage in which I was to drive home was standing at some distance. I left the Staff where it was. My General accompanied me, and we put spurs to our horses. I pulled up mine at the carriage—not an easy matter, for it was a thoroughbred—and there and then, in the presence of the Tsar, the Princes, the General Staff, and the Army, I took off my helmet, tore off my wig, and threw it into the carriage. The Prince Regent, who attached great importance to forms, afterwards said to me rather testily, 'What a diabolical manœuvre you executed with that wig of yours !' ”

Some one then alluded to the approaching journey of the Emperor (William II.) and his consort to Rome to visit the King and Queen of Italy, and Crispi asked the Chancellor whether he was going to accompany his youthful Sovereign.

"No," said the Prince, "I think not. For many years past I have not been able to sleep out of my own house; I can only do so in the bed I am accustomed to, and at my age a man cannot change his habits. Whenever I travel I have my own railway carriage, and my bed is put into it."

"But we should do the same for you. With us you would find yourself as tenderly and considerately cared for as in your own Germany."

"Oh, I don't doubt it. But it is not a thing of my own choosing, for the Emperor would first have to request my company. I cannot go to his Majesty and say, 'Here I am; I mean to accompany you.' And however gracious the Emperor is towards me, I very much doubt whether he will ask me to go. It is even considerate of his Majesty to dispense with my company. Lately, before starting for St. Petersburg, his Majesty said to me, 'I am going to take Herbert with me,' which was tantamount to saying, 'You can stay at home.' Moreover, that is quite natural. Both in character and taste Herbert has more in common with his Majesty than I. The Emperor is thirty, and Herbert eight-and-thirty, while I am now seventy-four."

"We should have fêted you immensely, Prince," observed one of Crispi's companions.

"That would be wrong of you," rejoined the

Chancellor. "In the presence of his Sovereign, a subject, no matter who or what he is, should retire into the background and suppress himself. Whenever I had occasion to accompany the late Emperor William anywhere, personal ovations were never offered me without his Majesty turning red at the idea. And yet he knew me well—knew that I never did anything to invite such demonstrations. Certainly, too, in the course of his long life, he himself never wanted for such applause."

At lunch next day the conversation turned on the French Press and its attacks on the Chancellor and his chief Italian guest.

"I always thought," remarked the Prince, "that I was the best-hated man of my time; but perhaps it was my vanity that inspired this conviction, as your Excellency has now become a serious rival in this respect."

"Certainly," remarked Crispi, "we are the two men whom the French do most abominate, though there is this difference between us. In the course of time you have undoubtedly done France a good deal of harm, while I, on the other hand, am always wondering what in the world I have done to incur the hatred of the French, and to what circumstance I owe my reputation as a Gallophobe."

The Prince reflected for a moment, and then said:

"There is something feminine in the French character. Women have two weapons which they can use to perfection—their tongues and their nails. I don't know how it is with the nails, but the French

are very fond of using their tongue and its equivalent, the pen. They have a great faculty for satire, slander, and malediction—which was recommended to them by one of their greatest geniuses—him, I mean, who was himself the best incorporation of their light and brilliant intellect, and said of calumny that some of it always took effect. As for me, they have vilipended me in every way—not even sparing my private life, though, finding nothing really objectionable in this, they had recourse to invention. They would have liked to paint me as a lost being, an immoral creature, a perfect cannibal, always ready even to devour little children."

The merits of some French journals and journalists were discussed, and some one mentioned the name of a "so-called authoress and politician" (presumably Madame Adam).

"*Ach, die da . . . !*" ("Oh, that woman !") exclaimed the Prince, with a look of something like ineffable contempt. And then: "I am not at all fond of women who meddle with politics. Nothing can be worse for a statesman than extra-ministerial influence of this kind, and nothing more terrible than closet intrigues which you cannot get at and control."

Here the Prince called for a glass of cognac—presumably to wash the taste of the disagreeable subject out of his mouth.

"*Absente medico*," he observed, "*nihil nocet*." (Schweninger was not of the party.)

At dinner the same evening, after some talk about the quality of claret, a telegram to the Chancellor was brought in, and he begged for leave to read it.

His countenance presently grew dark, and he called for one of his big pencils.

"Excellency," he said, turning to Crispi, "it has probably happened to you to feel savage at the ineptitudes of your colleagues."

"More than once," was the reply.

"One often feels inclined to disclaim having anything to do with them, and yet we never do it. . . . I should have liked to introduce a tobacco monopoly such as you have in Italy. But both in the Reichstag and the nation at large I met with such resistance to the scheme that I had to abandon it altogether. It will have to be carried out by my successors.

"And then as to a salt monopoly. As salt is necessary for agriculture, great quantities must be available for our farmers and graziers at a cheap rate. But to this end it must be mixed with some substance which, without injuring the cattle, renders it unsuitable for human use."

Crispi remarked that the Italian peasants submitted such a salt to a washing process, and thus adapted it to their own wants.

"Well, then," rejoined the Prince, "they don't mix it with a something which is too disgusting. But this is what we have done with our alcohols intended for use in our industries. For we have invented some diabolical mixture which makes these alcohols quite undrinkable. Oh! the very smell of them! Some samples that were kept at one of our Ministries for several weeks emitted such a dreadful stench that the officials fell ill; and if any one had the misfortune to touch the thing, he couldn't get rid of the smell for

several hours. Clothes and even food became impregnated with it—it was something too horrible."

Passing then to a pleasanter, if still painful, subject, the Prince detailed the struggle which he had to undergo with the military party at Nicolsburg, in 1866, in the matter of the peace-preliminaries with Austria.

"The aim of the war," he said, "had been attained with the exclusion of Austria from the Germanic Confederation. We had nothing more to ask for, yet the military party wanted more, and the King began to waver. His Majesty said to me in a tone of reproach: 'It was you who wanted war, and now you wish to keep me from reaping its just fruits.' But I remained inflexible. One evening the King flung himself down upon a sofa in a kind of pet. I said to him, most respectfully, 'Sire, your Majesty need only deprive me of the honour of serving you,' and with that I withdrew. To gain my room I had to pass through a long corridor, and this I did at my usual pace. But just as I was about to enter my room, one of the King's *aides-de-camp* overtook me and summoned me back to his Majesty, who hoped that I would now give in to him. The Crown Prince also did all he could to induce me to remain in office, and at last the King gave way. But it was a long time after that before I could succeed in convincing his Majesty that I had been in the right. The military party looked upon the results of the war as simply miserable." \*

Here Crispi threw in, with a smile :

\* See pp. 101, 116, 232, *et passim*.

"But what you did, then, was at any rate not to our advantage."

"No, your Excellency, but your own Ministers, your 'Consorteria' were to blame for that. At that time Italy was lukewarm."

Then the Chancellor began to speak of Russia and her language, saying that he had studied and was acquainted with it. He instanced several of its difficulties, but said that he had been determined to learn it at any price. As a language, Russian was rich and perfect. His only wonder was that a people like the Russians, who were still so backward in many things, were in possession of such a beautiful and highly developed tongue. As for the Russian soldiers, they were excellent. What Russia had always lacked, as it still lacked, was a body of officers corresponding to the needs of her army. Officers could never be highly enough trained.\*

"What your Highness says," remarked Crispi, "is quite true. It is often the officer who makes the soldier. A good leader will carry away with him hundreds of hesitating men. That was my own experience of our campaign of 1860."

"The Emperor Nicholas," remarked Bismarck, "said to his brother-in-law, our Frederick William IV., 'With soldiers such as mine, commanded by officers like yours, not a single cannon-shot would be fired against my will in all Europe from Moscow to Cadiz.'"

In answer to some other remark the Chancellor said, "We are not afraid of war, but we want peace;" and he

\* See p. 108.

was of opinion that Germany alone would be able to make head against her two great neighbours (France and Russia), should they ever seek to fall foul of her. He concluded, "We are like a strong young fellow with two good fists at his disposal—one for each of his antagonists."



## CHAPTER XV.

### *A FALLEN CHANCELLOR.*

IN the course of his conversation with Signor Crispi, Bismarck had already hinted at the existence of a growing coolness between himself and his "*Neue Herr*," his "New Master," William II. As Poschinger remarks, it soon became strikingly apparent that the youthful Kaiser was resolved to assert himself personally much more than his grandfather had ever done—a thing he could not do without a corresponding self-suppression on the part of his hitherto omnipotent Chancellor; and, indeed, it was not long before Bismarck was thrown into the shade *at his own* parliamentary dinners and *soirées* by the new Emperor, the sayings of the Chancellor being now little noted in comparison with those of his Majesty. The "new era" had already dawned.

Now, as afterwards when he was driven from office, Bismarck began to display a curious habit of lauding the character and methods of the old Emperor, as thus: "In his boyhood he had worn pigtail and powder and he had, therefore, to go through a complete mental transformation before he became the Prince whose memory we all bless. One of his chief qualities was the fidelity which he showed, even to his servants."

Or again : "The enjoyment of happiness requires a certain gift, which my late old master" [the Emperor William] "had in a high degree, possessing, as he did, the sanguine and phlegmatic temperaments combined. It was often difficult to get him to make up his mind, but once he had done so, 'one could build houses' on his resolution. Clearness and calmness kept his mind and heart in the finest and most harmonious equilibrium.

"Truth was dearer to him than aught else. In my diplomatic work also I always endeavoured to speak the truth, but circumstances sometimes compelled us both to deviate from it a little in public. But how hard that always was for the old Emperor! He always blushed on such occasions, and I—I could not look at him, and so quickly turned away."

These things the Chancellor said after he had been driven from office; but while as yet he held the reins of power he indulged, at one of his *soirées* (March 1889), in the following Plutarch-like comparison :—

"Of the three Emperors whom I have served, William I. was the one whom it cost me most trouble to decide on doing anything. But when once he had come to a decision he stuck to it, and one could now be quite sure of the matter.

"Frederick III., on the other hand, was easily braced up to this or that, but he had a tendency to change his resolution just as quickly. He lent his ear to subsequent whisperings, and was then capable of doing the very opposite of what he had previously resolved to do.

"The present Emperor" [William II.] "is so attentive to anything I have to say that he seizes and assimilates a suggestion almost before I have given it full expression."

Within a year, however, of this time, on February 4th, 1890, Bismarck said to several deputies at a parliamentary dinner at which his Majesty himself had also been present, "The Emperor is very fond of me, nevertheless I cannot make any forcible impression on him" [*imponieren kann ich ihm doch nicht*]. "Perhaps you will succeed in doing so, gentlemen, if you only try; but I have my doubts."

Over the coffee and cigars at this dinner the Emperor had sat in one corner of the room, Bismarck in another; and already it was gravely suspected by some of the deputies that a coolness had arisen between master and man. As a matter of fact this coolness was to result in a dissolution of co-partnery before another month was over.

"It is coming to this, I see," remarked the Chancellor on the same occasion, "that every working man will have an angel placed at his elbow, to ask him from time to time whether he hasn't been doing a little too much."

Before the Labour Conference met (March 1890), the Emperor had summoned a Council of Experts (*Staatsrath*) to hear their opinion on the subject, and these included a master-locksmith, Deppe by name. At a dinner which the Emperor gave to the members of this Council, Bismarck—while the guests were assembling—fell into conversation with the locksmith, who expressed his pride at the fact that his Majesty

at one sitting of the Council, had "given him the word"—*i.e.*, called upon him to speak.

"I wish to goodness," said the impatient Chancellor, "that his Majesty would now give the word for us to go in to dinner, though he is a long time about it!"

At a dinner which he gave to the French members of the Labour Conference, on March 19th, 1890—the day after he had sat down to pen his resignation—Bismarck remarked to M. Jules Simon: "But whatever happens, neither you nor I can be deprived of the credit which attaches to our both having seventy-five years behind us, with all their experience. I have wealth, and am the owner of twenty thousand acres of land, so it is high time that I should begin to look after it." The Chancellor's French guests were delighted "*de la bonne mine que le prince faisait au mauvais jeu.*"

Entertaining a deputation of Göttingen students on his seventy-fifth birthday—three days after his retirement to the Sachsenwald, the Prince remarked: "The Emperor has performed a singular *chassez-croisez*. For he has made his best General" [Caprivi] "Chancellor, and his Chancellor a General" [Colonel-General of Cavalry]. But "*le roi ne reverra*" was one of the things attributed to him about this time which he did *not* say.

A few weeks after retiring to Friedrichsruh, Bismarck was waited upon by a very select deputation of Berlin citizens, who presented him with an address; and at lunch he compared himself to Prince Metternich, who remarked after his fall that he had now descended

from the stage to the pit. But on a subsequent occasion the ex-Chancellor was more elaborate with the comparison, or rather with the contrast, saying :

"Many a Minister before me has been in a similar position. One who was particularly interesting to me was Prince Metternich, with whom I came into pretty close contact in my early years. He, too, was at the head of the political affairs, not only of his own country, but also, I think I may say, of all Europe, for a long time. He was thrust aside more suddenly and disagreeably than I have been, and had to flee ; and a subsequent colleague of mine, disguised as a cab-driver, got him safely out of Vienna.

"That was what he had to suffer after his great and brilliant career ; but when I met him shortly afterwards, I found him cheerful and contented. He said to me : ' I am glad to be out of the galley. I used to be an actor on the stage, and now I am a spectator in the stalls.' Well, Prince Metternich did not have the compensation that I can boast in the goodwill of his countrymen. I have never heard that, after 1848, deputations from Austria went to thank Prince Metternich at Vienna for his services to his country. He had not this compensation, and yet was happy and contented ; and so I beg you to be assured that I, too, am not dissatisfied, but grateful to God for granting me a spell of contemplative repose before calling me away from this world."

This is not the place for repeating all the confidences which the ex-Chancellor now began to pour into the ears of journalistic visitors to Friedrichsruh, these being reserved for a separate volume of the

Prince's table-talk. But what he again said of the three Emperors whom he had successively served may now be quoted.

"I entertain no sense of resentment towards the young Emperor. I stand towards him in the relation of a father whom his son has ill used. When I was a younger man I followed my King and master everywhere, and was thus able to counteract other influences. I am an old man now, and am physically unable to accompany a Sovereign whose journeys are so frequent, so rapid, and so distant. It is therefore inevitable that advisers who are in closer communion with him should have won his confidence, and won it at my expense. I am pleased to find that the Emperor means to undertake personally the work of Government, but I am sorry he did not let me know before that he had had enough of me ; I should myself have prepared a better exit. But, after all, I derive consolation from the fact that, if the Crown is a real power in Germany, I have mainly contributed to that result.

"It was a pleasure to serve the old Kaiser. And yet he had a very high idea of his position and his mission as a ruler. For him I would have done anything, nay, if nothing else had been possible, I would willingly have become his valet. . . . The old William was not, it is true, a great statesman, but he was a man of mature and sound judgment. He would never act without consulting one or more of his counsellors. Then, he was a perfect gentleman. He was true ; he appreciated what the French call *la relation sure*. I was deeply attached to him.

"The Emperor Frederick was a noble man. He

was not, perhaps, a man of great strength, yet he was one of very considerable perception, discretion, and tact. He was a sharp sword with a short blade. Three years before the Emperor William died, his son called me and asked me to stay with him. I saw both him and the Empress Frederick, and I promised to remain in office. And I would have continued with him to the last ; I would not have forsaken him, even though I had myself thought he was going wrong."

When entertaining the deputation of Berlin citizens before referred to, the ex-Chancellor said, among other things, that the "evening-red" of his career had been the reign of the ninety-nine days, during which he had been able to serve the deceased Kaiser Frederick. He had been quite prepared for having no difference with this Sovereign ; and, as a matter of fact, he had only had a good experience both of him and his consort.\* As for the Battenberg affair,

\* It will be observed that Bismarck was here speaking of the Emperor Frederick as a "monarch." But nothing is more notorious than that the Chancellor frequently had very grave disagreements with that same monarch during the time of his being Crown Prince. See, for example, p. 188, to speak of nothing else. But, indeed, in the matter of the "Battenberger," Bismarck had once before fiercely opposed the wish of the Emperor Frederick (then Crown Prince) to ally his daughter with Prince Alexander of Bulgaria, while as yet the latter was on the throne. To a Russian journalist, soon after his fall, Bismarck said: "Russia supported him" [Prince Alexander] "at first, and when he showed himself in his real colours, who was it if not I who opposed the wish of the Emperor Frederick and fought with might and main" [literally, "with teeth and nails"] "against the Battenberger's marriage with a German Princess?"

which had caused so many reproaches to be levelled against him, he had only treated that in agreement with Kaiser Frederick. Had that not been the case, his Majesty would surely have given some sign of his displeasure. But on the contrary, immediately after the affair was settled, the Emperor had embraced him.

Again, when entertaining another deputation of congratulators on the eve of his seventy-seventh birthday (1892), Bismarck began to talk about the Emperor Frederick, whom he lauded as one of the most amiable men he had ever known. Nothing was more inaccurate than the widespread belief that his relations to this monarch had not been particularly good. On the contrary, Kaiser Frederick had always agreed to his proposals, and at no time had he himself (the Chancellor) been so unrestricted (in his policy) as then. It had been touching to see how, during the time of his fatal illness, his Majesty never omitted to observe any of the rules of politeness. In spite of his extreme bodily weakness, he had always insisted on accompanying him to the door. He (the Prince) would on these occasions follow the Emperor in momentary expectation of his collapsing before he could reach the door; and even when he got that length, the august sufferer could only keep himself erect by holding on to the handle.

At luncheon one day, soon after his retirement, some one asked the Prince why he had now given up shooting, of which he used to be so passionately fond. "Oh," he said, "with my passions it is just the same as with the trout in my fish-pond. One has eaten up



the other till there only now remains one fat old trout. It is the same with me. In the course of time my passion for politics has consumed all my other passions."

And yet, two years later (January 1892), the ex-Chancellor remarked one day at table to a party of Leipzig students: "The interest which I formerly took in politics is on the wane. I feel like a wanderer in the snow, who begins gradually to grow stiff, and then drops down and is covered by the falling flakes—a pleasant sensation now creeping over him. It is pretty much the same with me. My interest in politics is decreasing, but I feel all the better for it, perhaps."

At the luncheon-party above referred to, when the Prince had declared that his passion for politics had eaten up all his others, Count Kayserling threw in, "Oh, but you will surely take to shooting again?"

"I think not," was the reply. "I should now be sorry to shoot at game."

One of the Chancellor's guests begged for and received permission to throw some scraps to his dogs. "I love dogs," said their master; "they never make us suffer for any harm we may do them."

Talking once of arboriculture—to which he was much devoted in his sylvan retirement—the Prince remarked that the pine was the most characteristic tree of Northern Europe. People were accustomed to regard the oak as the symbol of German virtues. This might be true of Germany as a whole; but for Prussia—its northern and north-easterly portions at any rate—the pine was much the more typical tree:

tough and frugal—these were the two qualities they had in common. Formerly—up to the forties, indeed—the Prussians had a reputation in other countries for being easily satisfied. Thus it was that, even in France, a Prussian had been treated with a certain amount of goodwill, combined perhaps with some little disdain; while the suspicion of his being an Englishman had once procured for him—the Prince—anything but benevolent treatment at the hands of a Paris cabman.

When entertaining, about this time, a party of Independent Riflemen of German origin from New York, the Prince said he might have gone to Varzin to spend the evening of his life, but then he would have had to become a thorough backwoodsman, cut off from all human intercourse. He had preferred Friedrichsruh, as here he lived in the neighbourhood of a large city (Hamburg), and could thus see some of his fellow-creatures from time to time.

It was a curious feeling, he said upon another occasion, for him to wake up of a morning and find that the only thing he had now to do was to wind up his watch. What he really wanted was something to do, although he was still suffering from the effects of overwork during his lifetime. The sense of responsibility for the lives of millions of men, and still more millions of money, had been too great. Even now he could not sleep sometimes for thinking of what he might have done. Yet the repose he was now enjoying was not altogether agreeable to him. An able physician had once remarked to him that the human mind accustomed to activity might be

compared to a rocket, which continued to rise as long as the powder in it burned, but sank and became extinguished whenever this ceased to blaze. It would just be the same with him, without something to do.

When lunching at Kissingen (August 1890) with a party of gentlemen from Heilbronn, Bismarck said: "A prophet, you know, has no honour in his own country. Once I was small, and now that I am great, there are many who cannot forgive me for the fact. But all malevolent judgments of me will be forgotten with time. As for the newspapers and what they write about me, I only look upon it as so much dust which I quickly brush away. I only attach a value to history and what it will have to say about me. My sole ambition now is to get a good epitaph."

Speaking of newspaper writers on another occasion, the Prince said he was sorry he had not known them better before his fall. One of the few things he regretted was his well-known apophthegm that journalists were men who had failed in their other careers—a remark, for the rest, which had been grossly misunderstood. He could quite see that there were some men who preferred a life of free intellectual activity to a humdrum and machine-like career. Such men should be oftener used in the service of the State, especially in diplomacy, as this was done, for example, with the best results in France, Italy, America, and England. "The value and utility of a political correspondent," said the Prince, about the same time, "lie precisely in the pliancy of his pen."

Talking (in February 1892) with a Berlin journalist of this pliant type, Maximilian Harden, about the

ultra-Conservative *Kreuz-Zeitung* and its noble editor (who subsequently had to flee the Fatherland on a charge of forgery), the Prince said: "*Ja, ja*, do you know that Hammerstein always reminds me of Richter (the Radical chief)? He is a clever fellow, but he tyrannises over his party precisely as Richter does with his. With the Conservatives, too, that is much easier, as they are mostly quiet, easy-going people, who go to a meeting of their party after wiping their lips over a dainty lunch, and are then only too glad to be told by any one how they have to vote."

Referring to the Emperor's new sumptuary edict relating to Court dress, the ex-Chancellor said to the same visitor: "Such trifles make a lot of bad blood. I can still remember how, as a boy, I admired my uncle in his knee-breeches. But for those who suffer from rheumatism, even when they wear an additional layer of flannel next their skin, it is dangerous. At the Court of Napoleon III. it was still the fashion, and, as Ambassador, I could not well rebel against it; but while waiting in a draughty corridor for my carriage I always had the feeling of being up to my knees in water. Apart from the English, who have still no other Court dress, it will not be *de rigueur* with the other diplomatists to conform with the new fashion."

Referring to the public expectation of his returning to Berlin to speak in the Reichstag, Bismarck said: "I should make my appearance like Banquo's ghost at the table of Macbeth, and many of my old friends have a bad enough conscience on my account without

that. But no, I don't think I shall do anything of the kind. People over-rate my ambition, and under-rate my self-respect. Within the limits of our present policy there is no place for me. Why should I go and take up a critical attitude towards Caprivi, who is only a mere *chargé des affaires*? I have always been a good monarchist, and shouldn't like to say anything that might be thought to have an anti-monarchical sound in the ears of the evil disposed. But, on the other hand, I am no absolutist, and in particular I do not think it is wise nowadays to seize every opportunity of placing the Crown in the foreground, and thus exposing it to direct attack.

"On my first becoming Minister I found the monarchy in a precarious state. My aged master even thought of abdicating, and it cost me no little trouble to prevent him from doing so. At that time I deemed it to be my duty to strengthen the power of the Crown; and, indeed, I succeeded to such an extent in doing this that means must now again be thought of for strengthening the power of Parliament. It would, indeed, be a misfortune for our monarchy and our national unity if we were made to lapse into an absolutist reaction, even of a transient kind; for then we should be ruled by a camarilla, or, worse still, by the '*Ewig-Weibliche*'" [the "everlasting feminine"]. "May we be spared all that!"

"The longer we live," said Bismarck to Paul Heyse, the author, at Munich, when dining with Lenbach the painter, "the more we are compelled to oppose people and make enemies of them. Gratitude withdraws when one has done one's duty." But it must

be borne in mind that at this time (June 1892) Bismarck's heart was very much embittered by the cold reception which had been accorded him at Vienna on the occasion of his son, Count Herbert's, wedding. For the German Emperor had directed all the members of his Embassy in the Kaiserstadt to take no notice whatever of the marriage—to boycott all the Bismarcks, in fact; while the ex-Chancellor himself had been denied the audience which he begged of Francis Joseph, and been otherwise cold-shouldered by all official circles. But this only made the ovations that were showered upon him by the people all the more enthusiastic. On this subject the ex-Chancellor said :

“Formerly all my efforts were directed to strengthening the monarchical feeling in the people. At the Courts and in the official world I was extolled and overwhelmed with proofs of gratitude. The people wanted to stone me. Now, on the other hand, it is the people who acclaim me, while the higher circles are careful to avoid me. I think that is what is called the irony of fate.”

A little later, at Kissingen, a New York lawyer (Mr. J. W. Holl) strongly urged the ex-Chancellor to visit America, where he was sure of the very warmest of receptions. Such a journey, returned the Prince, had been his ideal up to within ten years ago; but now the *vis inertiae* with him was too great, and only in the event of his being expelled from Germany—this he said with a smile—could he now think of crossing the Atlantic.

On finishing his “cure” at Kissingen, after all the

worries and chagrins of his wedding visit to Vienna, Bismarck retired for a season to Varzin, where he was visited by a Leipzig professor (Dr. Otto Kaemmel), to whom he launched out in the most enthusiastic manner about the warmth of his popular reception at Dresden, and everywhere else in Saxony, when on his way to the Kaiserstadt. Kaemmel took occasion to say that the first time he had seen the Prince was on June 30th, 1866 (three days before Königgrätz) while the latter was on his way with King William to the army in Bohemia.

"That must have been at Görlitz," observed the Prince.

"No ; it was at the railway station in Zittau."

"In Zittau," echoed the Chancellor reflectively. "Yes. At Reichenberg then we were in a very precarious position. For with us there we only had about three hundred Army Service men, armed with carabines of the 1813 pattern, which could be used for drilling but not for shooting. At Leitmeritz, however, about five-and-twenty miles distant, there were, we knew, half a dozen Austrian and Saxon cavalry regiments, which might ride across to us in four hours and capture the King and headquarters. Now, that would have been not so much tragical as ridiculous, so I went to Moltke and drew his attention to the danger. 'Yes,' he said, 'in war everything is dangerous.' I then went to the King, and managed at least to get the three hundred men, without fuss or alarm, drawn up round the castle where his Majesty was quartered. Me' also they offered a refuge there, but I remained in the town, as not wish-

ing to be thought a coward. As it so fell out, everything passed off all right, but the General Staff had taken it very ill of me, and between it and me there was a sort of tension ever after."

Shortly before this, when entertaining a party of visitors to lunch on July 3rd, 1892—the anniversary of Königgrätz—the Prince remarked, "We shall probably never see another Königgrätz, but we must still be prepared for a second Sedan."

On a previous occasion, one of his visitors—a Herr Bewer, who had written several books about him—remarked that if France were to begin another war with Germany, and were again defeated, she would have to be rendered innocuous for the future by surrendering her navy, ceding Algiers, and being compelled to maintain a standing army no larger than was required for preserving public order.

To this the Prince replied: "Ships are, after all, only empty iron and wooden boxes, and Germany could not man more than her own navy. Algiers has thriven on the soil of French civilisation, and could not easily be Germanised. The prohibition of a standing army is impracticable."

Herr Bewer argued against this opinion, but the Prince cut him short, saying, "The French race cannot be annihilated." He afterwards said, "I suppose Germany will never wage a 'prophylactic' war. However, the chemist is the only man who can answer the war question. Whatever enemy of ours gets the absolutely best powder first will give the signal for attack. The idea that, after the next



war, there will be eternal peace in Europe I regard as Utopian."

All men, he thought, were, and would continue to be, soldiers, whether they wore a uniform or not. "The deepest impressions," he once remarked, "which I absorbed in my youth were those of my term of military service; and I always cherished them, as an officer, sometimes more than was useful. When the time came for me to choose a profession, I was sorry that my parents did not allow me to remain in the army. These feelings are in our blood. We play at soldiers in childhood, and afterwards we are soldiers in earnest; and, if in earnest, we succeed."

This was also the doctrine of life which the ex-Chancellor preached to a number of school pupils from Hamburg, who sang to him a poem, composed for the occasion, with the refrain, "We Germans fear God, and nothing else on earth." \* Referring to this, the Prince said:—

"May these words apply to you when you are men. He who trusts in God and himself surmounts every danger. Never let yourselves be intimidated. The true philosophy is Schiller's soldier-song in '*Wallenstein's Lager*'—'*Wohl auf, Kameraden, auf's Pferd, auf's Pferd*': you know it. Do not ask what is going to happen to you in life, but go forward and meet it bravely and fearlessly. That is an old maxim, and those who obey it will find that the waves of life will

\* The words with which the Prince himself had concluded his famous speech in the Reichstag (spring of 1888), in support of a new Army Bill.

glide off them like water off a duck's back. If our lives lasted five hundred or a thousand years, and one had to be killed at last, there would be some reason in fear; but life is very short, and one ought to stake it for a great cause, courageously trusting in God.

"You have just sung a very beautiful song. I, too, used to devote myself to music, but I was only a middling pianist, and was glad when I was able to shake myself free from the study. But I regretted it extremely afterwards, for music is a faithful companion in life. I have missed it on many social occasions, and I strongly advise those of you who have a talent for it to cultivate the art. I remind you of my example in order to deter you from making the mistake that I have to reproach myself with. For the rest, I can give you only one piece of advice: Don't be either 'Camels,' or brawlers."\*

To the members of another Glee Club, the Prince expressed his regret that when young he had neglected music. He was grateful to music, for it had effectively supported his political endeavours. German song he considered as "one of the imponderables." But it had at all events contributed to the success of the efforts made to achieve German political unity. He reminded his hearers of the powerful effect of Becker's "*Rheinlied*" in 1848, and of the "*Wacht am Rhein*" in 1870.

In reply to the question whether he had ever been

\* German students who do not belong to any Club are called "Camels," and those who do are rather apt to be quarrelsome.

a singer himself, "Certainly," he said. "I always had to give the keynote in my Corps at Göttingen."

In answer to the further question what the students used to sing in those days, he replied, "Well, for instance, '*In einem kühlen Grunde*'"—and now here he was in the Sachsenwald in a very cool valley indeed.

On another occasion, after being serenaded by the members of a Dresden Choir (*Liedertafel*), the ex-Chancellor summoned the singers to his refreshment table with the words: "But now it is high time to pass from the ballads to the bottles" (*von den Liedern zu den Litern überzugehen*).

As for ballads, the Prince remarked, on the occasion of one of his birthdays, which brought him so many offerings in verse and prose: "It is a curious thing that nowadays almost every one writes poetry, and, it must be owned, mostly of a very good and finished kind. In my youth it was different."

For many years, he said at one of his luncheon parties, he had never been to a theatre, having no time for such diversion. The last play he had seen was Heinrich Laube's *Earl of Essex*. Once he had attended a gala performance at the Opera, when *Rheingold* was given. But Richard Wagner was not his favourite composer. This was Beethoven.

"It is true, I am not the man to take a ticket in order to sit and listen to music on a narrow seat, but I have always liked music at home. Up to my thirties, when I made the acquaintance of my very musical wife, I always regretted that I could not keep the music hour in my plan of lessons. As there is a

great deal of talk just now about the overburdening of youth, I may mention that I had at school to work thirteen hours a day. I had a French lesson and an English lesson, besides the other usual ones. So I had, unfortunately, to give up music. I have always regretted that, for every German is by nature a friend of music."

In December 1891 Madame Etelka Gerster, the celebrated opera-singer, was a visitor at Friedrichsruh, and to her at table the ex-Chancellor lamented that he had had so little time to devote himself to music and the drama. Never since hearing Madame Malibran sing had he enjoyed such a treat.

Learning from his tuneful guest that she was of Magyar origin, the Prince began to talk of his own Hungarian experiences. Once, in 1852, he had gone on a special mission to Budapesth, and profited by the opportunity to make a flying excursion into the plains. He was escorted by a Uhlan picket, which had been placed at his disposal by the authorities, as travelling in the Hungarian steppes, at that time was not particularly safe. In the course of his peregrinations he had once halted at a Czarda (roadside inn), and on his escort retiring to take a short rest, the peasants had hastened to him from all sides, and begun to address him with lively gesticulations, though he did all he could to make them comprehend that he was totally ignorant of their speech. It was only on the re-appearance of his Uhlans that the peasants retired, and then he discovered that they had taken him for a political prisoner and offered to help him in escaping from

his escorting troopers. With this manifestation of sympathy for his fancied distress he had been deeply touched.

On another occasion (May 1892) the Prince began to talk at table about Hungary, and this gave occasion to one of his guests—a certain Doctor Brendel from Montevideo, who had come to present to the ex-Chancellor an address from nearly a thousand Germans in the La Plata States—to express his regret that the Magyars treated so badly the Teutonic element in Transylvania. But the Prince, refusing to be drawn on this delicate subject, “assumed an icy air and an appearance of incurable deafness.” “He gives the keynote in conversation,” said the Doctor, “but he is not a piano on which one can play.” Changing the subject, the Prince began to inquire about the Italians in La Plata, warmly praising their energy and simple habits, and saying, “They are also the best labourers of all those now engaged on the Elbe-Kiel Canal.”

At a later time the ex-Chancellor said to the Secretaries of some Chambers of Commerce whom he was entertaining at lunch, that he had conceived the idea of this Canal as early as 1864, and even then treated for its construction with Duke Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein. Subsequently, however, he had encountered many objections on the subject from his highly honoured friend, Moltke, who was chief of the Commission of National Defence. Moltke thought that, in the event of war, it would be necessary to detach about sixty thousand men for the defence of the mouth of the Canal. To that he had replied that it

really didn't matter whether sixty thousand men, more or less, were wanted for this purpose or not, as, even without the Canal, Moltke would have to defend Hamburg, Kiel, Lübeck, and even Berlin, against an attack from the sea.

But the real strategic value of the North-Sea and Baltic Canal was only perceived when Heligoland, the naval station dominating the new sea-route from Kiel to Wilhelmshaven, was exchanged by the Emperor for the island of Zanzibar. Bismarck, already out of office, had been a very hard critic of this agreement (July 1890) between England and Germany; and yet, when receiving a company of Hull merchants, who had come over to Hamburg to be entertained by some shipping companies there, he said to them speaking in English:

"I am pleased to see so important a branch of commerce here, and particularly such a one as the mercantile marine, which has contributed so much to promote and establish those relations which are so profitable to both nations. Commerce is the great promoter of civilisation, and has done much to create the friendship which exists between England and Germany. It is the spring of all international progress, and conduces to cordiality, in fact, because politeness is the oil of the engines of human life. Things that are German are not so much esteemed in England as English things in Germany. (No No!) Germany may be compared to a self-made man, whereas England is an old aristocratic lord. We have often been together in times of peace as well as in trouble, still the best relations exist

between the two nations, and a proof of this has been given by the speedy settlement of the African question."

Two years later (October 1892), when talking to some visitors about the Anglo-German agreement with regard to Africa, the ex-Chancellor said of the man whom he himself had sent out to suppress the native insurrection against the Germans: "Wissmann has crossed Africa twice, and never committed a single folly. When he came to me before starting for Zanzibar to put down Buschiri's insurrection, and asked whether I had any special instructions for him, 'My dear Major,' I said, 'what would be the use of instructions, in view of the fact that it takes six weeks for a letter to reach Zanzibar? You surely don't take me for the old Aulic War-Council. Your only instructions are to conquer. I give you full leave to draw your bills of responsibility on me; I will accept them all.' I have unlimited confidence in Wissmann. He has traversed the Dark Continent twice, and has come out each time with a white waistcoat. He has never caused either us or himself any difficulties. The sword-knot at his side is to me a further guarantee for his conduct. If he should get into conflict, my instinct will always prepossess me in his favour. Emin may be much cleverer than Wissman, and he certainly is a *savant*; but I believe, if I had his profile here, it would be seen that he has no hind-head—that is, full animal energy—which cannot be entirely dispensed with in Africa."

Certainly the Prince himself had plenty of hind-head, or occipital energy; and otherwise he was

blessed with pretty much the same kind of temperament as had enabled Wissmann to cross the Dark Continent twice with a "spotless waistcoat."

In August 1891 representative students from all the German Universities held at Kissingen a grand festival commemoration in honour of the ex-Chancellor; and one of them, in proposing his health, had said, among other things, that the Prince had always had "to struggle with German melancholy and disunion." In replying, the Prince begged leave to remark, "in parenthesis," that he himself had scarcely ever been subject to melancholy, but that, on the contrary, he had always been dominated in his actions either by the choleric or the sanguine temperament.

This was the kind of temperament which had enabled him to do such mighty things for his nation as once drew from the old Emperor one of the finest compliments, in the opinion of the Prince, which had ever been paid him. When entertaining at Friedrichsruh (May 1893) a party of Oldenburg visitors, the talk came to be of the great national monument in the Niederwald, near Rüdesheim on the Rhine, and the Prince expressed his regret that illness had prevented him from attending the unveiling ceremony (in 1883) along with the Emperor, all the members of his family, and the magnates of the realm. His Majesty, however, had presented him with a miniature model of the work, and in doing so said, "That is really your own monument." "Ah," said the Prince, a little later, of the old Emperor, "*he* was a whole man—sensible, honourable, and brave." About the same time, too, the Prince



called on a company of guests to drink in silence to the memory of the Emperor William I., "the Ruler who lives for ever in the recollection of his people as a model of magnanimity, valour, love of honour, and gratitude."

But soon after this, the ex-Chancellor became outwardly reconciled to the grandson of this model of all monarchical virtues—that grandson whom he had once characterised in the bitterness of his heart as a "rich heir"; and the reconciliation appeared to be complete when William II. sent the Prince, on the occasion of his seventy-ninth birthday, a magnificent steel cuirass. "May the solid steel," he wrote, "that is to cover your breast be regarded as the symbol of German gratitude, which enfolds you with its steadfast loyalty, and to which I, too, desire to give my eloquent expression!" "I shall don this new breast-plate," replied the Prince, "as the symbol of your Majesty's gracious favour, and leave it to my children as a lasting memento of the same."

"Whatever may be our political differences," said the ex-Chancellor a few weeks later (April 1894), when entertaining a party of National Liberal deputies at lunch, "the rallying point for us all must continue to be the person of his Majesty the Emperor"—William II. In spite of the exceeding bitterness of his heart, Bismarck, the real Unifier of the Fatherland, was still staunchly true to—

KAISER AND REICH.

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